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CONTEST WIN! A HEADPHONE
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WELCOME

It's time to be woken up and handed the coffee. The home of the future will no longer rely on your senses to hammer your life into shape. Home-automation has come of age and you'll be pleasantly surprised to learn, it's easier to adopt than you think. Our **Cover Story** (p34) this month solves the puzzle and lays down the groundwork that will hopefully give you the push you need to jump on the smarter wagon.

Since most of your chores are now going to be handled by machines, you'll also need a hand at helping you get fitter. **Garmin** (p9), Timex and Intex are some of the new options that motivate you to get out of that relaxobed and out on to the streets. Strapping a new piece of tech around your wrist sounds easy but that alone won't melt away the extra millimetres. But the UI and industrial designers should take a bow for at least getting us geeks thinking about fitness, speaking a language we relate to.

It was a good month to be out on the road too. We drove a few high-nosed SUVs, an American legend and follow the team that will be setting new land-speed records. Adrenalin couldn't come in more exciting ways and we're in the business of dishing it out in online form too now. Get with it on www.stuff.tv/in.

Nishant Padhiar, Editor / nishant@haymarketsac.com / twitter.com/nishantpadhiar

OUR LOGOS EXPLAINED...

The bearer of this accolade has gone up against its peer(s) and emerged victorious.

A gadget sporting this badge is a five-star product, and the one we would buy, if we were us.

...and a word about prices

Generally, we show the manufacturer's recommended price. Two exceptions:

- **Asterisk marked prices (*)** are indicative prices and subject to change depending on geographic location.
- All prices in the **Top 10s** are the best we could find at the time of printing.

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On the Cover
Model Kim Lee

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haymarket

CONTENTS

p9

ON THE COVER

p54 Fly me to the moon

p76

p64 Top of the game

p68 Meet the monsters

HOT STUFF

6 **The Hot Four**
- Fallout 4
- Apple Music
- Garmin Vivoactive
- Oculus Touch

14 **Gigapixel Robots For Good**
The amazing machines cheering up sick kids

23 **Vital stats Intex iRist**
Say hello to Apple Watch's local contender

26 **I made this... Rui Sousa Campos**
Meet the innovator behind Iddo, the BMX trick sensor that will make you *extreme*

29 **Apps**
Get healthy or die shoppin'

30 **Vital stats Canon 5DS**
The world's highest resolution DSLR

32 **Games**
Too good for just kids? *Skylanders Superchargers*

TESTS

48 **First test**
- *HTC M9*
- *Play Station TV*
- *Sony Z3+*
- *Parrot Bebop*

57 **Tested Fitbit Surge**
The fitness tracker the world uses is finally here

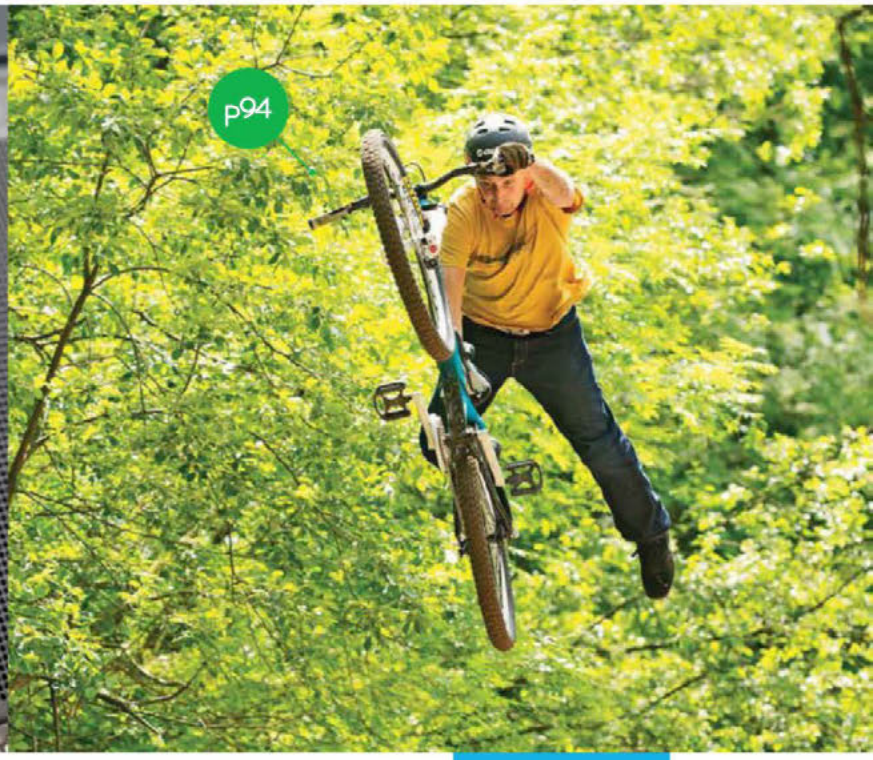
64 **Versus**
- *MSI Dominator Vs Acer Nitro*
- *Timex Ironman Vs Fitbit Charge*
- *Volvo XC 60 Vs Range Rover Evoque*

76 **Tested Games**
- *Arkham Knight*
- *Kerbal Space Program*

08.15

SUBSCRIBE NOW
FOR BIG SAVINGS OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE!
p88

p81


p94

FEATURES

34 **Cover feature** **The smarthome arrives**
From your app-controlled oven to your sleep-tracking mattress, your house has become the ultimate gadget

46 **Event** **MWC 2015**
Shanghai becomes the hotbed of tech this year and we get right in the middle of it

59 **Auto of Tomorrow** **Smart wheels**
Ford is taking in-car tech to the next level

70 **Techspedition** **Bloodhound SSC**
The beast-car aiming to top 1000mph. Or, if you prefer, *The Hound Of The Faster-Thrills*

81 **Design** **Inspired by nature**
When gadget designers take their cue from the prettier bits of the natural world

90 **Media hoard**
Stuff reviews films, music and books

114 **Next big thing?** **Growduce**
A bio-printer that's brilliant with rubbish

PROJECTS

94 **Beta yourself** **Action Photography**
Tips and tricks to click your way to action-snapping glory

96 **Playlist** **Comedy**
Look at you giggling, you little twinkletoes, you

99 **5 ways to reawesomise...** **Android Wear**
Now that you've mastered the basics, it's time to get smart with your smartwatch

TOP 10 OF EVERYTHING

Looking to buy something but need a bit of advice? Turn to our *Stuff* Top Tens: our expert listings of all gadgetry, from **p101**

HOT BUY

LG 55EC930T
★★★★★
OLED *and* 4K
p108

HOTST

IT'S GOING TO BE HUGE

The new *Fallout* promises to take up months of your spare time with a post-apocalyptic Boston (USA, not Lincolnshire) to explore, and vast expanses of wasteland in which you'll be eaten, repeatedly, by Deathclaws.

IT'LL TEST YOUR METAL

Given how sumptuously realised New Vegas was way back in 2010, we're expecting jaw-drop injuries from a colourful Eastern seaboard adventure; better warm up your Xbox One/ PS4/PC.

UFF

23 PAGES OF THE BIGGEST STORIES FROM PLANET TECH

IT'S GOT A DOG IN IT

Of course it's got a dog in it. *Metal Gear Solid* has one, *Call Of Duty* has one, and *Fallout 3* had DogMeat. No self-respecting console blockbuster would let you go into battle without an Alsatian to back you up.

HOT FOUR #1

WE'RE READY TO FALL IN LOVE AGAIN

Fallout 4

In June 2015, just for a few minutes, the world dimmed. It wasn't a glitch in the power supply or ghosts in the machine; it was a significant portion of the geek population stopping whatever they were doing and watching the new *Fallout 4* trailer. Food fell unwrapped from the end of production lines, deals were left hanging in the Stock Exchange, sheep stood half-shorn. And why? Because it's been five years since the last game in the series, *Fallout: New Vegas*. Five long years since we took time off work just to squeeze as much as possible of Bethesda Studios' apocalyptic open-worlder into our minds. We still don't know a great deal about *Fallout 4*, but we know more than we did. And we know that there's going to be another planetary slowdown soon: the week that it comes out, none of us are doing any work.

As hot as... YouTube's servers
Xbox One, PS4, PC / fallout4.com

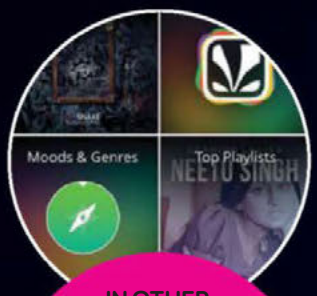
HOT FOUR #2

WATCH OUT, SPOTIFY

Apple Music

Apple has launched its much anticipated Spotify-rivalling music service. Beats founder Jimmy Iovine's launch preamble included an observation about how many disparate music services there are and, just for a moment, we thought he might say "So we decided not to bother." Instead Apple Music is a 30-million-track streaming service, with an accompanying 24-hour radio station called Beats 1 and themed playlists created, not by an algorithm, but by real people. A social media feature called 'Connect' will enable artists to share their darkest secrets (or lyrics) and you'll ask Siri to look up songs or playlists. The service launched on 30 June in over 100 countries, initially only on Apple devices and will be on Android and Windows apps a few months later.

As hot as... Nelly's house from US$10/month / apple.com/music

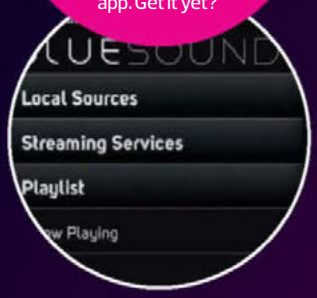


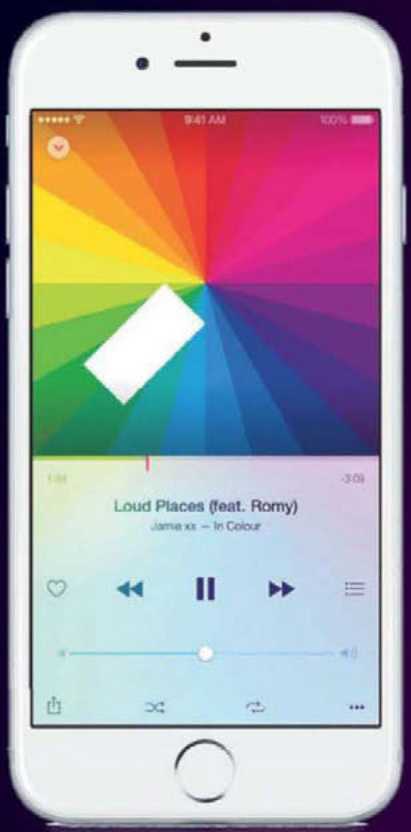
IN OTHER MUSIC NEWS #1

Local favourites Saavn and Gaana both have had updates to their interface along with a booster shot of new tracks and sharing features. Guvera isn't far behind making the Indian streaming scene pretty thick...

IN OTHER MUSIC NEWS #2

Bluesound, which is the audiophile's choice when it comes to streaming music at home has just released a massive update that brings Qobuz Sublime and Tidal HD services to your BluOS app. Get it yet?





HOT FOUR #3

TRAINING DAY

GARMIN VIVOACTIVE

Move over, amateurs. This isn't some half-hearted attempt at making an activity tracker for the fitness dilettante. Not at all. It's a proper smartwatch for those who hit the sack only after a spell at the gym and wake up in the morning wondering whether they've got enough time to fit in a quick 10k run before work. A colour touchscreen and on-board GPS meet 50m water resistance, notification mirroring, media player controls, activity reminders, and even swimming lap logging to make for some crazily comprehensive fitness tracking. The Vivoactive also doubles up as a remote for the ViRB Elite camera, and with Garmin's open app platform now up and running, expect new apps to keep rolling in at the speed of a runaway skateboarder.

As hot as... the exhaust of a NASCAR racer

₹18,000 (approx) / garmin.co.in

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HOT FOUR #4

VR GOING TO HAND IT TO YOU

Oculus Touch

By now your Oculus preparation should be well underway. You should be compiling the bits needed to build a kick-ass PC. You will have got rid of most of the furniture in your lounge to allow for lurching room, and unburdened yourself of any extraneous items such as partners, jobs and sporting interests. But you need to add another line to your budget. We now know that Oculus has teamed up with Microsoft and will be bundling an Xbox controller (with a PC connector) for basic game menu navigation and movement. But the real hand controls will be these newly announced Oculus Touch controllers. They feature various motion and position sensors, as well as vibration feedback motors so you can 'feel' objects in VR.

As hot as... your palms after the first hour

₹tba (due summer 2016) / oculus.com

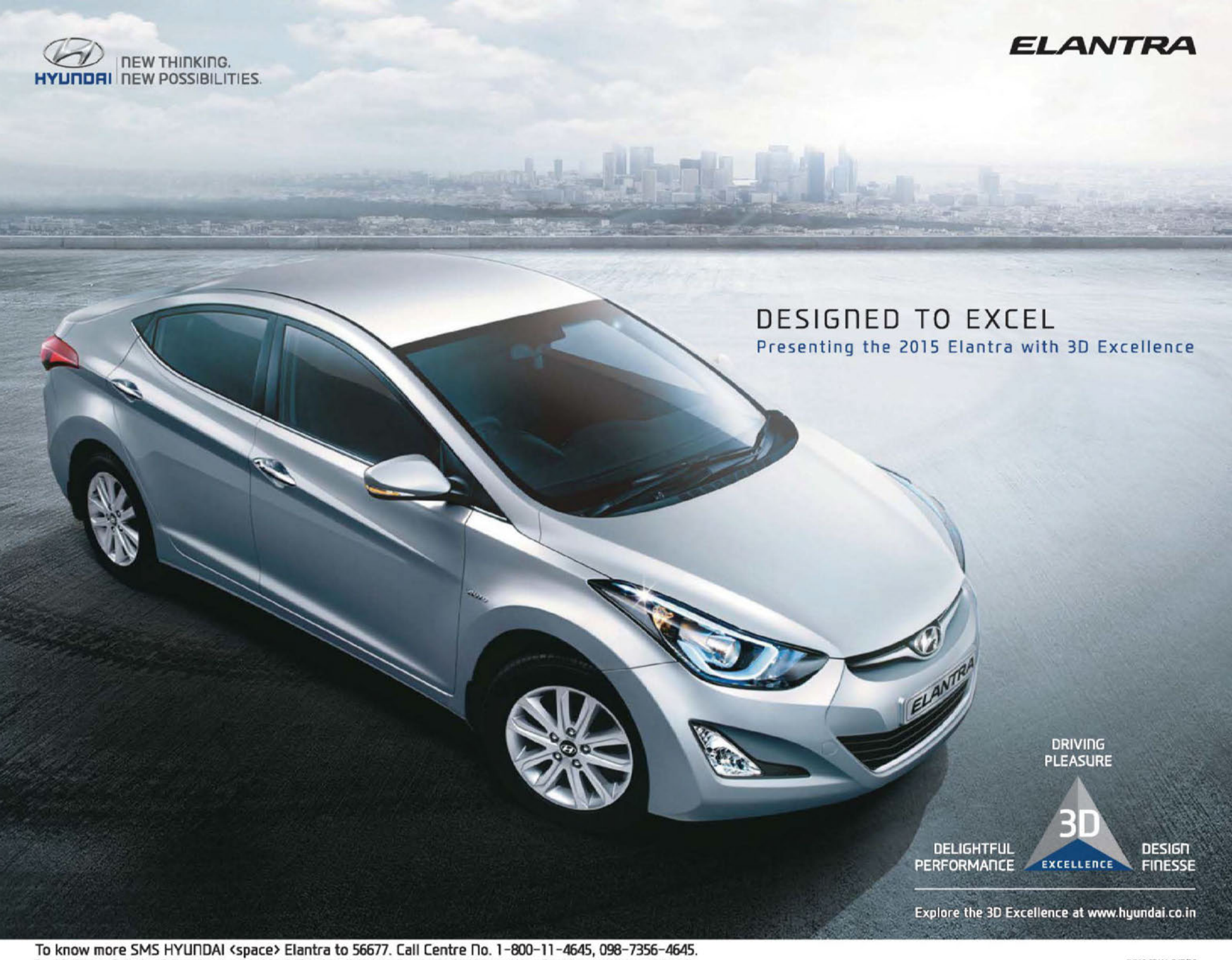
WHERE YOU'LL FIND US IN 2016

EVE: VALKYRIE

Multiplayer spaceship dogfighting in immersive, high-definition VR with *Battlestar Galactica*'s Katee Sackhoff as a CO and guide? Shaddup and take our money already.

EDGE OF NOWHERE

Where we hope the Rift experience will excel is in roaming RPG adventures, like this wintry spookster, where you'll be able to make intuitive run-and-jump decisions.



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INNOCEAN-047/15

ICON

THE AVAKAI IS EITHER A VERY SMART KIDS' TOY, OR AN ALIEN PARASITE (OR BOTH)

AVAKAI

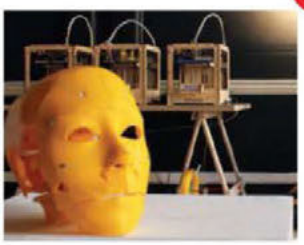
₹tba / vaikai.com

Nice skittle.
Now, listen. If you were to line these up and throw things at them, it would probably constitute a crime. Certainly a crime against your child. It would be as unthinkable as if you had fed your child's pet rabbit to a fox right in front of its eyes.

You have to feed a fox in front of its eyes. That's where its mouth is.
Don't be glib. Hidden within that wooden exterior are touch sensors, a gyroscope, a compass and a thermometer. Bluetooth Low Energy lets them communicate with each other: games of hide and seek can be initiated, whereby one Avakai triggers sound, haptic and light feedback from another. They may even let your child play.

Play! So it's a toy – not something I can be arrested for maltreating.
How crispily black-and-white is your mind. You're wrong – because the Avakai also speak the language of smartphone, and via the app, you (the parent) can send musical messages to your son or daughter. You could be there in the room or, using juvenile distance terms, a thousand million miles away at work. And that makes this more than a toy – it makes it an avatar. Of you. How are your poor bewildered offspring going to react to you apparently beating yourself up?

I'd rather that than feel I've been censored by a little wooden idiot.
Look into its eyes for a moment. Look into its expressionless, unwavering face and know this: the Avakai have another game. There's a secret compartment inside each of them, in which secret messages and tokens can be found. Something about the size, they've asked us to point out, of a finger. An adult human finger.



BE NOT AFRAID

While it's hard not to imagine this guy chowing down on the remnants of your dismembered limbs, it's actually part of an initiative to build telepresence robots so that hospitalised children can get remote control VR access to zoos, museums and the like. London-based Robots For Good is combining two open-source building projects – the InMoov robot and the Segway-like OpenWheels – into a roaming adventurer for kids at Great Ormond Street Hospital. We'll have more on this, and other well-meaning robots, in the next issue (if we're still alive).

NEWS FEED

JOLLA, INTEX TEAM UP FOR SAILFISH 2.0

The Intex Aqua Fish will be the world's first Sailfish 2.0 smartphone. Expected to sneak (swim?) in under the ₹10,000 mark, the Aqua Fish should be out by November and will be sold on Snapdeal.

HERE I AM, ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE!

Got a band and found your sound but no luck with reaching out to your audience? Log on to Yahavi.com, a platform that connects artist to their target audience. From fans to producers, this is THE virtual stage for you.

FACEBOOK FOR BUYING AND SELLING

Don't just sell that old guitar at the usual places just because it might be quickerrrrr. Try desidime.com which is a free platform where the *aam janta* can collaborate, make friends and share information for the best deals and shopping.

NOW WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BEAST

Windows 10

₹free / microsoft.com

Twisty tops like the Acer Switch 10 are just the sort of thing that Win 10 likes to crawl into

Finaly, the time has come to kiss Windows 8 goodbye forever...

But only on your PC. *Stuff* had a man locked away in a room; his only task was to ride the 'fast' update cycle of Windows 10 pre-release builds. During the last Haribo delivery, he reported that the bugs were getting fewer and fewer, the Windows 10 experience getting slicker. But this isn't Microsoft's first rodeo. And so it's concentrating on the PC launch before it gets to the phones, the HoloLenses, the Xboxes and the Surface Hubs. We hope July 29 was a fun Wednesday for you.

There are seven versions. An alarming prospect, but most of us can ignore the Enterprise and Education versions. For us, it's Windows 10 Home, Windows 10 Pro and Windows 10 Mobile – the new moniker for Windows Phone. Any of these three versions will be free for existing Windows 7 and 8.1 users. There doesn't seem to be any nasty small print about that. Home is the most basic, but is still your go-to choice for everything from desktops to hybrids and tablets, and it is packed with Cortana, Continuum and the new Edge browser. Pro only adds small business security tweaks and mobile working wotsits.

There's multi-state madness. Our man in the can is super-excited about how slickly Windows 10 handles switching between the keyboard and tablet modes. With a single desktop screen replacing Win 8's big-box, little-box chaos, the whole experience has been much finessed. It's an indicator that Continuum – the synchronicity of mobile and desktop apps – might actually work. Meanwhile, rumours suggest the Explorer-eradicating Edge browser will run Chrome and Firefox extensions, despite not being based on the same Webkit platform. How? Best ask Cortana. Make use of her being entwined into all versions of Windows 10.

THE EDGE BROWSER MAY RUN CHROME EXTENSIONS. HOW? BEST ASK CORTANA

Whooosh!

NIKE AIR ZOOM ELITE 8

The difference between the world's fastest athletes and us normal slowpokes can run into volumes. Besides genes, discipline, training (yawn!) and other factors, their gear definitely plays a major role. Enter the Zoom Elite 8, the flagship of Nike Zoom range, a series with a 20-year-old lineage. Built with tightly stretched tensile fibers woven inside a pressurized Nike Air unit, they offer zippy responsiveness under running conditions. Strap on a pair of these feature-rich shoes to upgrade yourself from 'friendly neighbourhood jogger' to 'menacing speed demon'. Just do it already.

₹8995 / store.nike.com

SOMEBODY HELP US...

WE'RE GIDDY ABOUT WINDOWS 10

Continuum!
Ah, the prospect of sauntering into the BA lounge, plugging a smartphone into a monitor and nailing some spreadsheets using proper desktop Excel. (Mainly, the BA lounge bit.)

HoloLens!
Windows' motto used to be "Where do you want to go today?" Now it's "Wanna stay at home and explore dinosaur anatomy in VR using HoloLens?" And the answer is "Yes".

Actualness!
Not a trademarked feature, but a revolutionary aspect of Windows 10 is how real it is. Preview builds of the OS have been available to pretty much any Tom, Rick or Jane for months. No smoke. No mirrors. We know how it's going to be.

Metrosexuality 101

JAGUAR J-CUT 30

Did you know that there's a radically different type of Jaguar that's on the prowl among the elite? No, not the feline kind, nor the four-wheeled variety. The Jaguar in question is a brand famous for grooming products that deal with hairdressing and styling. And the J-CUT 30 is the perfect portable hair trimmer for your facial hair woes. This trimmer even has a microchip that protects the battery from overcharging. With various tools that offer different levels of trimming, this just might be the key that open the gates to your metrosexuality.

₹9975 / headstartinternational.in

Hipster cool

ASUS X555

So you're hipster and you got yourself the whole shebang. You've zeroed in on the microbrewery that shall now officially be your haunting ground. There's just one thing that's bothering you. For some reason, you're not a fan of iThings. We hear you, and point you to the ASUS X555 notebook series. Choose between Core i5 and i3 – both notebooks have Nvidia GeForce 920M built in for that gaming edge. With enough features to take care of everything, from heating issues to playing obscure indie music on audio designed by SonicMaster and AudioWizard technologies, this series has got exactly what you're looking for.
from ₹28,999 / asus.com/in

Lemon's in

LENOVO K3 NOTE

This cheery-faced killer's available in white, black and of course, the colour of the season – lemon yellow. Okay, we made that up; we're not experts on colours or seasons. Nope, the real reason we like this Note is for its 5.5in, Full HD IPS screen, 64-bit processor, 2GB RAM, dual SIMs, 4G, 16GB storage (expandable by up to 32 GB), 13MP f/2.0 rear camera with dual LED flash, 5MP front cam and 3000mAh, removable battery. And what we really, truly like it for is that 4-digit price tag.
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My precious!

LOGITECH K480

"One keyboard to sync them all, One keyboard to type in them. One keyboard to fit them all, and in the process bind them!" All hail the dark lord of portable keyboards, the Logitech K480, which can connect up to three devices via Bluetooth. What's that? You wonder if it can connect your Android smartphone with an iPad? Pah! Have faith, oh naysayers! The K480 can connect across all platforms – Android, iOS and even Windows – to truly be the universal portable keyboard dark lord, with a full-fledged keyboard layout, shortcut keys and a stand to hold thy device notwithstanding.
₹2795 / logitech.com

Click

INFOCUS M530

The amount of tech your smartphone can house around the ₹10k mark is rising by the day. We rub our hands with glee every time we hear of a new launch. Like this InFocus M530, which boasts a healthy 13MP with flash for both the front and the rear cameras, because yes, your face is worth it. And there's an able 1.7GHz Octa Core chipset with 2GB RAM to handle your trigger-happy demands, along with a hefty 3100mAh battery. Go on and win that selfie contest!
₹10,999 / snapdeal.com

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#1 Projector Brand in India

Market Share of more than 19.11%
Source: Future Source Consulting Report, 2014

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Authorised Dealers: NORTH:-CHANDIGARH: Emsoniq-9814171908; **DELHI: NEWDELHI:** M/S Lakozy Audio Imagination-9910041260, Gemini Technologies-9711155550, Sound Lounge-9811040054, Speed X Solutions-9873627323 **HARYANA: PANIPAT:** Mateos:8950700027 **PUNJAB: LUDHIANA:** Classic Technology-9646140581, Rabs-9501177800; **PATIALA:** Lanstec 9646024365; **RAJASTHAN: JAIPUR:** JB's-9829365222; **UTTAR PRADESH: KANPUR:** Sumnoor Soundlab-8090807000, Technoserva-9839035884, **LUCKNOW:** Solutions-8684003838; **WEST:-GUJARAT: AHMEDABAD:** Lakozy:9898062104, Iscon Techno Solution-9227219007; **BARODA:** Yash Computers-9825060263; **MADHYA PRADESH: BHOPAL:** Techno Aspect-7509084590; **INDORE:** Pacific Marketing-9826037540; **NAGPUR:** Technosales-9860555969; **MAHARASHTRA: GOA:** Ripples-9326141848, **MUMBAI:** Lakozy-9820027219/9323897006; **NAVI MUMBAI:** Decible Studio-9702057720; **PUNE:** Lakozy-9822326001, Technosales-9860124888; **RAIPUR:** Surabhi Electronics-9425208644, **SOUTH:- HYDERABAD:** Color Edge-9849077597, Sound & Vision-9849019080; **KARNATAKA: BANGLORE:** DNI Home Theatre-9845283741; **KERALA:** Metro Digital-9846598467; **TAMIL NADU: CHENNAI:** Rakhi Wala-9600008060; **COIMBATORE:** Audisee-9944123222; **MADURAI:** Visual Focus-9842266322; **THRISSUR:** Geo Enterprises-9633852066; **TIRUNELVELI:** Avalon Data Products-9842176494; **TRICHY:** Museek-9790003371; **EAST:-ASSAM: GUWAHATI:** Techno Guru-9954016338; **ORISSA: BHUBNESHWAR:** Corporate Business Machines: 9437029139; **WEST BENGAL: KOLKATA:** Promises-9903371100

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Weekend truckin'

LEGO MERCEDES-BENZ AROCS 3245

Lego's newest Technic set has us drooling. You don't have to be a kid to enjoy this one; hell, no, we wouldn't let kids anywhere near it, no sir. There's almost 3000 parts, a motorised crane and dump lid, suspended axles and hand us a bib, a six-cylinder engine with moving pistons. That should be enough to keep you busy the entire weekend. Oh wait, there's a B-model included? Make that 2 weekends then...

₹tba / funskoolindia.com/lego

QUICKTEST

Kingston HyperX Cloud Core

₹4999 / kingston.com

Kingston has a history of impressing us with good quality gaming headsets that happen to be quite affordable too. The Cloud II that was reviewed in our June issue, impressed us for the most part. The only thing we didn't like was the 7.1 surround-sound effect it came with. The Cloud Core doesn't come with any such trick.

Cable stable

In fact, it comes with no soundcard. It has a separate extension cable that plugs into the smaller main cable that's connected to the headphone. You can connect the Core to PS4 and Xbox One controllers through its shorter main cable, while connection to a PC is done through the extension that has a connector for line in and one for the mic. It doesn't get simpler than this.

Itch the stitch

The flagship HyperX Cloud II was available in three different colour options. Red, gun metal and a limited edition pink. We liked the original red-and-black the best, and it still looks stellar on the Core. The build quality is the same as the Cloud II and the cans feel as great as they've always been. The main difference between the Cloud II and the Cloud Core is the Core's all-black design. The metal cup holders that were red in colour on the Cloud II are black on the Core, while the red HyperX logo still remains on either side of the cups. The headband has memory foam and everything else remains the same.

No trickery

No soundcard module means no silly effects that are induced mainly by phase shifts. Yes, you do miss the control you get over the master and mic volume levels but it's asking for a lot at such a price. In fact, if anything, the Core proves very impressive for the money it comes at. Like the Cloud II, it has an exceptional command over what games have to throw at it. Shoot with machine guns, sniper rifles, throw grenades or listen to Trevor ravenously abuse an imbecile, everything is on the money. The microphone could be a tad better in terms of isolating external noise, but now we're just nitpicking.

Satisfaction to the core

The Core can pack a punch without costing too much. If you're in the market for something that's not too expensive and gets the job done, the Cloud Core is just what you should get.

Stuff says ★★★★★

At such a price, such a product is a must-have and comes highly recommended

Women of the skies

BREITLING CHRONOMAT 38 SLEEKT

What do women want? Yikes! Dangerous territory. Still, we'll let Breitling try coming up with a straight answer. From the brand well known for its aviator series comes the Chronomat 38 SleekT, which is aimed at the fairer sex that prowl the skies. The new sleeker model with a 38mm diameter is a salute to the modern woman in control. The SleekT features a black lacquered dial with mother-of-pearl inlays and is water-resistant to a depth of 100 metres. A reliable and sturdy companion for the woman of substance, indeed.
₹por / breitling.com

The piper pays a tribute

RAYMOND WEIL FREELANCER PIPER

So what if the contender is known for its aviator series of chronographs. Swiss watch brand Raymond Weil's maiden attempt is definitely no pushover. Its first-ever pilot watch, the Freelancer Piper, is a tribute to the Raymond Weil's founder, who was a passionate aviator. Made from a special collaboration with legendary aviation manufacturer Piper Aircraft Inc., the 45mm dial timepiece has a mechanical self-winding chronograph movement with date and GMT functions. With rotor-reminiscent hands and a titanium and stainless steel body, this tribute is one that'll soar through the skies for the victory lap.
₹por / raymond-weil.com

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MWC SHANGHAI 2015

IS THIS THE DROID YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

Intex iRist

₹11,999 / intex.in/i-rist

Spidey says cheese!

The 5MP camera on the crown is a rather neat touch. Though you do look a bit like the Power Rangers or Spider-Man gone undercover

Is it a smartphone? Is it a smartwatch? We just can't tell with the iRist...

Gimme a KitKat
Android Wear? Whassat? The iRist uses proper Android KitKat, so you get to install regular apps like Gmail and Google Keyboard. Neat, as now you have the choice of tapping out messages. speaking aloud to Google Now or using the Voice Assistant app.

Secret Agent time
Q wants his smartwatch back. No, really. With a 5MP camera on the crown, the iRist is the kind of gadget you dreamt about as a kid. Sure, you won't be holding an exhibition at the Tate anytime soon, but who cares when all you gotta do is point and shoot. Literally.

Roger and wilco
Smartwatches that work as glorified smartphone accessories might be all the rage, but the iRist comes with 3G, GPS and Wi-Fi. That means you can leave your phone home and still call in sick from work while heading for a movie. You can also tether it over Bluetooth like other smartwatches. But hey, you know what, put in a SIM and make your inner child squeal with delight each time you hold up your watch and talk into it. Copy that?

Rock around the clock
A dual-core processor, 4GB storage and 512MB RAM make the iRist pretty powerful for a smartwatch, while microSD support (up to 32GB), makes it a pretty nifty music player (you get a Bluetooth headset along with it). The iRist also has a sapphire glass and is water-resistant, so you can wear it without ducking into shops the minute you spot a cloud in the sky. But the best part of the iRist is that at ₹11,999, it undercuts the Moto 360. Okay, Android KitKat might not exactly be made for small screens (like the iRist's 1.5in, 240x240 IPS display), but with all that power? Might just be worth it.

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Tricolour pride

SEVENFRIDAY P SERIES

Once again, like birthdays, India's independence day will be upon us soon this month. And as is the norm, the tricolours of our national flag will see prominence in everyday objects. Why not take a different approach (seriously, stop buying those plastic flags already) and try on the Independence-centric P series watch from SevenFriday? There are three colour options of orange (SevenFridayP1/02), white (SevenFridayP1/03) and green (SevenFridayP1/05) to choose from. These stainless-steel case, water-resistant timepieces are a must-buy for wearing your patriotic fervour on your sleeve.
₹93,850 / sevenfriday.com

Double trouble

HTC ONE ME DUAL SIM

Ho Ho Ho! What? It isn't Christmas yet? Doesn't really matter, because the HTC One ME Dual SIM smartphone is sure to bring some tech-cheer about. With stock goodies of HTC to boot, the 5.2in WQHD (1440x2560) resolution display promises to be a fun multimedia-viewing platform. A quick-firing 3GB RAM with a hefty 20MP rear snapper will definitely find some quarter with the masses. Let's just hope the 2840mAh battery can keep up with today's gruelling smartphone demands to make this a whopping present of sorts.
₹40,500 / htc.com/in

Native hipster

VANS MOHIKAN COLLECTION

Sporting a chic upper made from premium suede with water-based inks and dyes, the recently launched Mohikan series from Vans has two variants to choose from - the Surf Native Brown Patina and the Leather Metallic Gold. The company, which became famous with skateboarders in the US due to its signature sticky gum soles and sturdy construction, seems to have come out with a series that seems like a distant tribute to the Native Indians of America. It's the perfect hipster ensemble for those visits to the local Starbucks, indeed. Of course you go there strictly for the coffee. We believe you.
₹5999 / vans.com

INGENI-O-METER ●●●●● Digitising dirt jumps and gamifying the gnarl

I MADE THIS

THE TRICK TRACKER

Rui Sousa Campos explains why BMX is only the beginning for Iddo

Doing a trick on a bike or board is like doing a painting — it's like a Van Gogh. But you cannot keep a record of it. I decided to try to do something about that.

Right now the Iddo sensor is at prototype stage and being supported by the Microsoft Ventures London Accelerator process, but there are already riders beta-testing it.

What the sensor does is beyond the capability of any smartphone. Iddo doesn't fudge feedback by applying a one-size-fits-all algorithm to a single parameter of data, as a basic activity tracker does, but records as many strands of data as possible, and has each contribute to the detail of the picture they provide.

We started with a plastic casing, but we have a team of BMXers who soon showed it wasn't going to last, so now it's aluminium. The most unique component of the Iddo is an altimeter that's accurate to just 10cm. Knowing how massive a jump was, helps determine the score the algorithm assigns to it, so Iddo has to get it right.

Also important are the sensors for temperature, ambient light and humidity. They allow you to more accurately track what's happened. You can see: OK, this BMX race was on a rough day, there was a lot of humidity, or the temperature was low or high. It'll allow you to compare results more accurately.

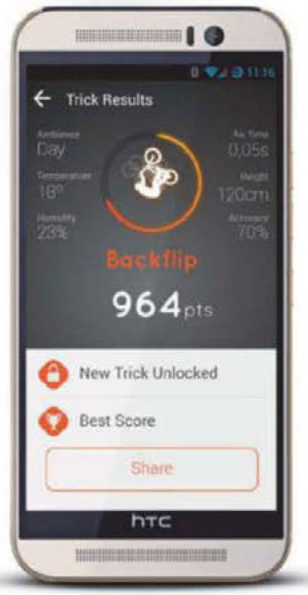
Otherwise, as you'd expect, there's an accelerometer, gyrometer and magnetometer to map movement. An ARM Cortex M4-based processor runs the trick-crunching algorithms and 1GB of Flash storage captures movement data. There are GPS, GLONASS and BeiDou [*a Chinese GPS variant*] sensors too, allowing riders to record race and training data, and letting freestyle riders see where other Iddo users have performed tricks.

Iddo will sync with an app in real time via Bluetooth. We're really keen to build a community of Iddo users, all sharing their track times and trick scores. There will also be unlockable achievements, instant messaging and Facebook sharing. There's even going to be an audio function, which we're really excited about, where the app tells you through your headphones about other riders nearby who are nailing their tricks.

You'll be able to 'ghost race' other BMXers, getting real-time feedback as you ride. The app will be able to tell you whether you're better off taking air over a double jump or keeping the bike on the ground. This doesn't exist in the market at the moment — nothing can map this kind of behaviour. For the guys into BMX racing I think it's going to be a killer feature.

Of course, we know that BMX racing is a niche market. But the Microsoft Ventures process is going to give us the chance to perfect the product and tweak the algorithms. And then we can look at expanding Iddo into other sports. There are loads of future options, including surfing, downhill mountain-biking, skiing and motocross.

The key is rapid prototyping. We built Iddo using off-the-shelf components and 3D printing. Hopefully we can get to a stage where we're so proficient that we can begin developing hardware for other startup companies too.



"THE APP WILL TELL YOU TO AIR THE DOUBLE OR STAY ON THE GROUND"

Cyclops drool-worthy

OAKLEY X-METAL COLLECTION

Oakley's well known for its unique, uber-cool designs, which is probably why it's the favourite brand of a certain x-man who goes by the moniker of Cyclops. Of course, Wolverine does get his claws on a pair every now and then, just to piss Cyclops off. But we digress. The latest from Oakley are called Madman (pictured) and Badman - part of its X-Metal collection. While 'Badman' does bring a certain Bollywood villain to mind, we definitely wouldn't mind donning on this quirky-looking pair of shades.
from ₹21,990 / oakley.com

Super Novo

PANASONIC P55 NOVO

The smartphone market is no longer a playground for only the well known. While Panasonic is no newbie, its latest Android smartphone, the 5.3in HD display P55 Novo, houses a 1.4GHz Octa Core chipset supporting a 1GB RAM. A pair of 13MP rear and 5MP front snappers, both with flash, should appeal to the vanity-brigade. A unique feature that sets it apart is the integrated IR Blaster that can be used to control TVs, set top boxes and the like. Download the Peel Smart app which converts the P55 Nova into a universal home control. Aww, don't look at your 'big brand' smartphone like that. It's doing the best it can, you know.
₹9290 / mobile.panasonic.co.in

Urban jungle weaponry

SWISS MILITARY WORLD ALARM TRAVEL CLOCK CUM ORGANISER TORCH

"It's a jungle out there." The motto works just as amicably even outside of what traditionally constitutes a 'jungle'. One's daily life in the city can be competitive enough, and thus, one must equip oneself with all that one can to get that winning edge. Take the World Alarm Travel Clock cum Organiser Torch, for instance. Features like a calculator-type display, instant world-time converter for 18 cities on a rotating dial, perpetual calendar, digital thermometer, torch with three white LEDs and five language options make this an urban tool to reckon with.
₹1390 / swissmilitaryworldwide.com

Legend, revamped

BOSE SOUNDLINK MINI BLUETOOTH SPEAKER II

Remember the original pocket-racket? The size-defying performance from Bose's SoundLink Mini pretty much established the benchmark during the early days of Bluetooth speakers. The second generation now has voice-calling capabilities along with voice prompts through which you can pair it with a Bluetooth device. It comes in two colour options and claims 10 hours of playtime. Just the thing for your musically-inclined, hard-on-hearing gramps... or for yourself. Your call.

₹18,000 / boseindia.com

You can pick up this tab

SAMSUNG TAB A

No, seriously, this is a tab that you can indeed pick up. At 7.5mm, the Tab A is extremely thin and weighs only 320 grams. It promises a good viewing experience with its 4:3 aspect ratio and rich Adaptive Display. And for those of you fond of reading long blogs or prone to writing unending emails, here's the good news: this 8in display tablet gives you 20% more screen estate for web pages and 30% more for composing long emails and SNS messages, along with 4G capabilities. A 1.2GHz Quad Core chipset with 2GB RAM and 16GB memory is onboard to handle all your multimedia indulgence.

₹20,500 / samsungindiaestore.com

DROP EVERYTHING & DOWNLOAD

Korg iM1 $29.99 / iPad

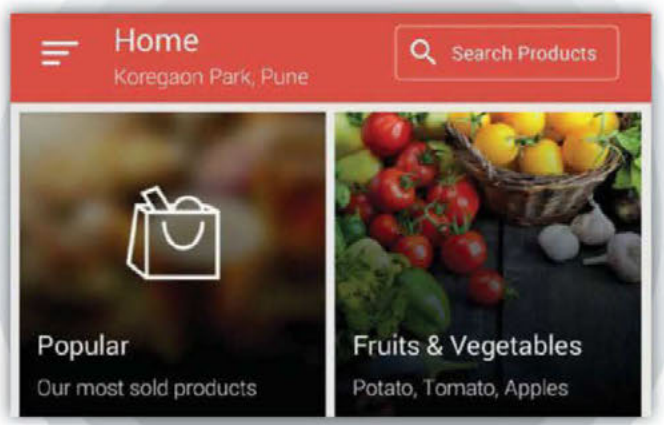
The Korg M1 was a big synthesizer with a surprisingly minimalist design. But what musicans did with it was complex and enormous, and now Korg's engineers have poured their knowhow into an even more minimalist form: the iPad version.

They've put the iM1 together in such a way that it makes software decisions that mimic the circuitry of the hardware original. If you're already familiar with the M1 then you'll recognise the sounds the app creates, but it's upscaled: new effects, new tones and the addition of Kaoss pads for fingertip tweakery – plus you can plug Korg's MIDI controllers into your iPad for additional musical ability. The $29.99 price tag might seem a lot of money for an app, but there's months and months of creativity here.

APPS

This month's mobile must-downloads

1



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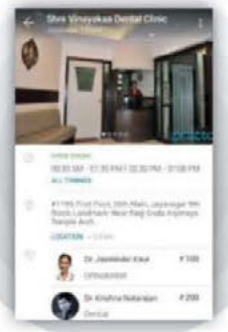

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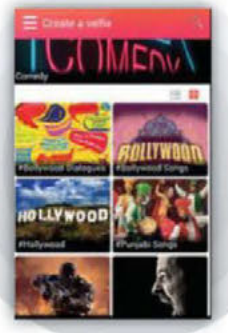

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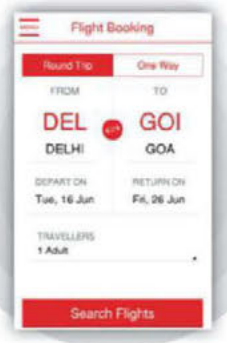

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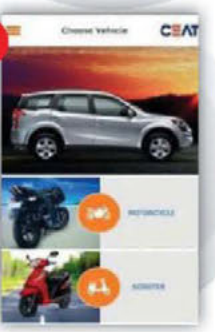


1 PepperTap

from ₹free / Android, iOS

You've got guests dropping in a couple of hours, there's no snacks in the house and it's pouring cats and dogs outside. Who do you call? Your groceries, via Peppertap. The app promises delivery within two hours.

2 HealthGenie

₹free / Android, iOS

You've been so busy running marathons, you've had no time to buy your supplements, medicines and cosmetics. Yes, these are things we all forget (we don't run marathons; we're just forgetful), but HealthGenie will deliver.

3 Transitpedia

₹free / Android

This app is designed to tell you how you can best reach from point A to point B using public transport, locally as well as between cities. It not only covers the distance and mode of travel, but also the time it will take you to get there.

4 Practo

₹free / Android, iOS

New in the city, unwell and don't know any good doctors around? Let Practo be your advisor and appointment booker. You'll find details like the doctor's qualifications, consultation fees and other critical information.

5 Blueair Air Quality Monitor

₹free / Android

Tired of those unending arguments with that visiting friend on whether his city is more polluted than yours? Well, here's an app to help you settle that. Shove it in their face!

6 SpiceJet

₹free / Android, iOS

Yup, it's your SpiceJet airport counter on your phone. Not only can you manage bookings, make payments and check flight status through it, but also pre-plan your seats and meals. There's a discount on excess baggage too.

7 Taxo

₹free / Android

Do words like Vat, GST, Excise and Service Tax strike fear in your heart? Wish you had a non-judgemental friend who'd explain how it all works? Well, here's an app that'll answer all your queries without scoffing at you.

8 Velfie

₹free / Android, iOS

Video selfie. Yes, we knew you'd ask. Yes, groan, it is indeed like Dubsmash, only here you can pause and continue a video from where you left off and also create another frame. Yes, we're going to spam our friends too.

9 CEAT Tyres

₹free / Android, iOS

Tyres are important and need as much attention and care as the rest of your car. Ceat helps you do just that with tyre-change reminders, tips on tyre care and safe driving, customer care, and even Ceat Cricket Rating (yes).

APP SPOTLIGHT SNAKKOO

₹free / Android, iOS

Everybody wants to be a critic. The only question that remains is this: Will you be a Paula Abdul or a Simon Cowell? We ask because on Snakkoo, besides finding coffe shops, restaurants, multiplexes, bakery shops and the like, you can also review and rate them. Check out menus, prices and even place home delivery orders – all via one convenient app. By the way, we're more of a Gordon Ramsay kind of critic. Just saying.

THE WORLD'S HIGHEST RESOLUTION DSLR

Canon 5DS

from ₹2,52,995 (body only) / canon.co.in

If a normal picture is worth a 1000 words, the massive 50-megapixel pics from Canon's new semi-pro snapper are *War And Peace*

That really is a whopping great big sensor, physically and electronically.
In fact, it's the highest-resolution sensor ever found in a DSLR camera, and it should be capable of absolutely enormous amounts of detail: printed full size on a standard 200DPI inkjet, images from the 5DS's monster 50.6MP full-framer are over a metre across. Some people will tell you that the number of megapixels isn't the big deal it once was – any camera that's into double figures will be enough for most casual shooters. But with a gigantic 50MP-plus image, you'll be able to crop into a small fraction of the picture and still see bags of detail, and for some – serious fashion photographers, landscape artists and anyone else who makes very detailed images – that surfeit of pixels will be good news.

But... isn't it better to have fewer pixels?
Ah, the age-old pixel controversy. Because while more pixels equals more detail, it also means less area for each pixel to collect light – this is why HTC's Ultrapixel cameras are built with fewer pixels, for better low-light performance. But in a camera this specialised, Canon obviously has its sights on people with big flashes, reflectors and, er, daylight – those fashion fiends and landscape lovers we mentioned just now. It's even unveiled a posh new wide-angle zoom lens, the 11-24mm f/4L, which should particularly suit landscape and architectural photographers. If they have enough money.

PRINTED FULL SIZE, THE IMAGES ARE OVER A METRE ACROSS

SAVE ₹2 LACS!

You could simply...
Buy a different camera. The new 750D and 760D replace the 700D as the cameras aimed at fledgling DSLRers. Both are similarly specced-out with 24.2MP APS-C sensors, DIGIC 6 image processors, an ISO range of 100-12,800, 19-point autofocus, 1080p video shooting, Wi-Fi, NFC and vari-angle LCD screens.

But which one?
The biggest difference lies in the control layout. The 760D features a design more akin to the company's pricier, enthusiast-friendly models: a top-plate LCD panel, a Quick Control Dial and an Intelligent Viewfinder. The 760D also offers extra creative modes for movie shooting. The 750D costs ₹50k for body only or ₹56k in a kit with an 18-55mm lens; the 760D will cost ₹55k for body only.

Boomerang TV!

ACER XR341CKA

Yes, it's a gaming monitor, but no, it won't come flying back at you if you fling it. Don't try that, ever. The Acer XR341CKA, joining the curvy tech brigade, claims to be the world's first curved gaming monitor. The 34-inch display behemoth has a 21:9 ultra-wide aspect-ratio, Nvidia G-SYNC for minimised stutters and screen tears, DTS sound and a massive 178-degree viewing angle. With various features to get the average gamers amongst you more excited than a volatile ion, this just might be the curviest thing you can get your hands on to play with, other than... never mind.
₹89,999 / acer.co.in

A pen for your thoughts

MONTEGRAPPA GENIO CREATIVO KHALIL GIBRAN

Leaving nothing to chance, Montegrappa's close collaboration with the Gibran National Committee and renowned Lebanese artist Katja Traboulsy has brought forth this highly detailed tribute to one of the greatest poet/painter/philosophers of the open era. For each pen sold, a donation will be made by Montegrappa to the Gibran National Committee. The design features blue-black and grey colours that are prominent in Gibran's paintings. Also, the series is a limited-edition one with 1883 pieces (in honour of the birth year of the writer), comprising fountain pens, roller balls and ballpoint pens. The attention to detail throughout makes this a truly worthy tribute.
from ₹78,995 / montegrappa.com

25 SEPT

FIRST PLAY SKYLANDERS SUPERCHARGERS

PS4, PS3, Xbox One, Xbox 360, Wii U, iPad

This is just for kids, isn't it? Until now, we'd have agreed, but with *SuperChargers* introducing 20 land, air and sea vehicles, our inner sprog is starting to think it might be too good to waste on those pesky rugrats.

For the uninitiated, *Skylanders* uses a 'portal' platform on which real-life figurines are placed to transport them into the game. Position the Hot Streak model in place, for example, and a fully customisable hot rod will pop up onscreen. Plonk down its related owner, Spitfire, and you unlock more options, while progressing through the game opens up an ever wider array of mods: mix and match wheels, engines and bodywork.

Each ride feels different: Hot Streak is sticky and tactile on the road, a bit like racing an RC car around a massive car park, and the environments play a big part in the way the vehicles handle. Do you pick a submarine to dive under the procedurally generated ocean, or bounce over the waves in the hovercraft?

But multiplayer is where *Skylanders* really comes to life, mixing vehicle and on-foot challenges. Two player co-op continues in shared screen mode, but when using vehicles, players tag-team so that one steers while the other shoots. For families of mixed abilities and ages it's a nice way to get everyone involved.

If you've upgraded to a new console recently there's no need to worry either – you can most likely still use your old portal. The Wii U can use the Wii portal and the PS4 can use the PS3 portal – although it's worth noting that the 360's portal won't work with the Xbox One. Boo.

COMING TO A CONTROLLER NEAR YOU...

ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE

(PS4, Xbox One, PC / due 23 Oct)

Eight years after the original game was launched the *Assassin's Creed* World Tour finally rolls into Blighty, offering numerous opportunities for dodgy Russell Brand cock-er-nee accents, virtual historical sightseeing and myriad one-dimensional cultural stereotypes. Just like all the other games, then. Less repetitive than the pirate-based *Black Flag* (although we did dig the jolly sea shanties), the focus is on London during the industrial revolution; you play a twin brother/sister duo and there's a range of modes of transport to try, including trains, horse-drawn carriages and a zipline that you can fire from your cuff. All this should mean that traversing *AC*'s biggest ever map doesn't get tedious. And even if it does, you can always head to the nearest boozer and join in an old cockney knees-up. After that, you can head back home and play *Assassin's Creed* again.

ARIZONA SUNSHINE (PC)

One of the first proper games to be confirmed for HTC's Vive headset, *Arizona Sunshine* proves that zombies are most definitely joining the VR revolution. While they might struggle with the headset thanks to their rotting flesh, their shambling should make them a little easier to hunt in the scorching heat, which the game's Dutch makers say is as big a killer as the flesh-hungry fiends themselves. They also reckon the Vive's motion controllers bring 'unprecedented realism to zombie shooting', which suggests they know something we don't about the undead.

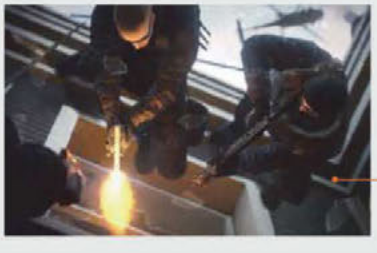
FIFA 16

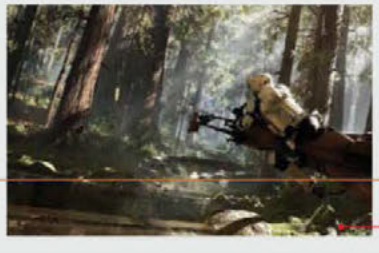
(PS4, Xbox One, PC, PS3, Xbox 360)

Just 22 years after *FIFA International Soccer* launched, *FIFA 16* will finally allow you to take control of women's teams. Twelve national sides are represented, including England, and they've been motion-captured in the same way that the men's teams have. If only Sepp Blatter were still around to appreciate the tightness of their pixel-perfect shorts. What a shame the horrible old toad's gone. Oh, and if you're offended by this, you deserve to be locked in a room with a hungry Luis Suarez.

ASSETTO CORSA (PC, PS4, Xbox One)

If *Project Cars* has got your engine purring for some more hyper-realistic racing on your console, one of PC gaming's most highly regarded sims is also making the jump to its lounge-friendly counterparts. *Assetto Corsa* lacks the bells and whistles of your *Forzas* and *Gran Turismos*, but its handling model is widely praised as one of the best in the business. This console version, due next year, has the same laser-scanned circuits as its PC cousin, including Silverstone, Spa and the Nürburgring's Nordschleife, plus over 100 different cars.





INCOMING

THIS MONTH
- UNTIL DAWN

SEPTEMBER
- METAL GEAR SOLID 5
- NBA 2K16
- MAD MAX

OCTOBER
- RAINBOW SIX: SIEGE

NOVEMBER
- STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT III

HOME IS WHERE THE SMART IS

Gadgeteers have been talking about connected, automated homes for a long time, but – as wireless connectivity becomes cheap and ubiquitous – the smarthome is at long last taking shape. Join us on a tour of the home of the very near, very cool future

FRONT DOOR

YALE YDM-4109

₹34,270 / amazon.in

Hate having to fumble for your keys every time you get back home? Get the Yale automatic locking system, which uses a finger-print verification method, set on your door. All it takes is a touch, and voila, you're welcome to your own abode.

GOJI SMART LOCK

$299* / gojiaccess.com

The Goji uses facial recognition to log in visitors to your home and sends you real-time alerts too. What's handier, though, is that you can schedule access to anyone with a supported smartphone – say, your maid at 7am.

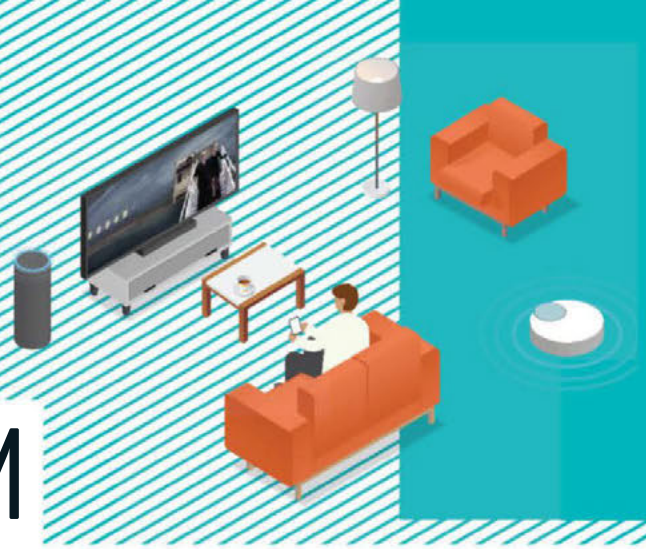
EERO

$500* / eero.com

To borrow a phrase from Heineken, Eero covers areas other Wi-Fi routers can't reach. It deploys a team of hubs around your home, creating a mesh network, so you won't get any annoying dead spots. That's quite important when everything inside needs a connection.

[**Words** Nisha Khot, Tom Wiggins **Illustration** Jing Zhang]

BEDROOM
p42
A/V CAVERN
p40
LIVING ROOM
p36
KITCHEN
p38



LIVING ROOM

Wiring up some surround sound speakers and a TV the size of an industrial solar panel used to be about the extent of it when it came to tech in the lounge, but nowadays your sofa can be a veritable Mission Control of comfy home automation.

Mumbai-based Raylogic (raylogic.in) has dealers across the country who provide customised solutions, ranging from automating your AV system to your lighting and security, using equipment that's locally manufactured. Then there's the intuitive B.One Hub (b1hub.com), which not only allows you to control your home via a single hub and app, it also picks up on your habits and adjusts your environment accordingly. And it also sends you notifications on certain key activities in real time.

But what we're looking forward to is the day our gadgets begin to speak to each other. Nest's Thermostat ($249* / amazon.com) can "talk" to the Jawbone Up activity tracker, so the temperature of your house will automatically adjust to your preferred degree the moment you go to bed or you even leave it.

There's also a Nest app for your Pebble and more partnerships with Philips Hue lightbulbs (see below), Withings' Aura and LG's kitchen appliances. It all points towards a network of home tech that'll talk to each other – even when you're not there.

AQUA TIMER DRIP

₹6950* / watermyplants.in

Everyone loves a spot of green, but not everyone has a green thumb. How many plants have you killed simply because you forgot to water them? If your answer is more than 5, it's time to get yourself this timer-based drip irrigation system. You can programme it to automatically water your plants – upto 24 pots at a time – even when you're on vacation.

PETCUBE

$200* / petcube.com

With the internet pretty much powered by pictures of puppies and kittens it's a wonder anyone would need to see more of their pets, but if your furry babies are more important to you than any real ones, this connected camera is nigh-on essential. Check on them, talk to them and even play chase with them using the built-in laser pointer when you're not home.

DYSON 360 EYE

₹tba / dysonindia.in

Dyson's new robo-vacuum is extremely clever. A 360° camera works out where it is in a room to make sure it doesn't miss a spot, while the companion app gives you more control than with other autonomous dust-munchers. Dyson Link (₹free / iOS, Android) allows you to schedule sucking sessions and even view a map of its progress. Bet it's more fun than watching TV!

PHILIPS HUE

from ₹28,500 / amazon.in

Philips' app-controlled, colour-changing lightbulbs now have an extra trick up their LEDs that mimics some of the functionality you get from pairing them with an Ambilight telly. Hue Camera (₹250 / iOS) checks your iThing's lens to analyse your TV screen and uses the hue, saturation, luminance and more to recreate the colours with your Hue bulbs.

AMAZON ECHO

$200* / amazon.com

If you're concerned that nobody in your house ever seems to listen to you, Amazon's Echo might be just what you need.

Imagine Siri got evicted from your iPhone and took up residence in a robotic Pringles tube, and you've pretty much got the Echo.

It responds to voice commands, offering a hands-free way to check news, weather and sport scores; play music from your Amazon Music account or internet radio; set alarms and add stuff to your to-do lists; or just look up stuff on Wikipedia. Inside are seven microphones, so just say 'Alexa' to wake it up and it'll hear you even if it's playing music at the time.

There's also Bluetooth on board, so you can stream music from your phone or tablet, plus there's a 2.5in woofer and 2in tweeter inside – so it shouldn't sound like a musical Pringles tube. But it will look like one.

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IS THERE AN ECHO IN HERE?

ONE
Prime members can get an Echo for half price, although it's only available in the States right now.

TWO
The more you talk to the Echo the better it gets to know you and adjusts to the way you speak.

THREE
There's also an Echo app for your Kindle Fire, iThing or Android device that lets you manage alarms, lists and more.

POWER UP

Wireless charging is never going to take off unless it's fully embedded into our homes – and what's already in most people's homes? That's right: Ikea furniture.

The world-conquering shop will soon start selling lamps, bedside tables and separate plug-in charging pads with wireless power-up capabilities built in, so all you'll need to do is plonk your phone down in place for it to start supping away at your mains power. It'll use the Qi standard, so there are certain gadgets that'll already work with it. Contact that aunt in Dubai and place an order!

The next step will be to increase the distance between gadget and charger: uBeam turns electricity into sound then transfers it via ultrasound, so you can keep your phone on you.

ADD THIS...

MERLIN WIFI CONTROLLER

₹4200 / mymerlin.in

Connect this nifty device to your home Wi-Fi and you can turn on or off your connected appliances from anywhere in the world using the internet. It can learn IR commands of virtually all your IR-controlled home appliances.

KITCHEN

If the techiest thing in your kitchen is the electric bread knife you got from the Innovations catalogue in 1998, it's time to rethink which gadgets grace your galley.

Appliances are now becoming much cleverer. Bosch is baking HomeConnect tech into its appliances, so your new fridge, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer are all online. That'll mean you can operate them from afar using an app and check the contents of your fridge from the supermarket via its built-in cameras. Other companies, like Samsung with its Evernote-ready T9000 smart-fridge which it showcased at the CES 2013, and LG (see lghomechat.com), plan to integrate the tech too. You'll never have an excuse for forgetting to buy milk again.

Of course, if all of that sounds a bit too much, there's the Delhi-based Oakter (oakter.com), which is working on allowing you control over any device that can be plugged in, such as your water heater. The mobile app lets you remotely turn your appliances on or off, or schedule them to run at a specific time of day without the need for your intervention. The system runs on "power leaves" and a "hub", and is a breeze to set up. Imagine never having to wait for the tap water to heat up or rushing home to run that water pump! Yes, life is going to get much, much easier soon, fingers crossed.

LG TWIN WASH

₹tba / lg.com

It's hard to get excited about a washing machine, but with its hidden second drum you can at least pretend LG's Twin Wash system is hiding top-secret material. In reality it's more likely to contain nothing more than your dirty pants, but with built-in Wi-Fi allowing you to check its progress mid-wash and notify you when it's done, you might not want to hide this one away.

BROOKSTONE PERFECT DRINK

₹6715 / amazon.in

Want a party trick that also mixes your drinks? Well, this nifty device won't actually mix your drink for you, but it'll certainly make sure you don't mess up. Pick your cocktail via the app — there's tonnes of recipes. Place your glass on the smart scale, follow the pouring instructions and watch as a virtual glass fills on your screen. It'll tell you when to stop.

PICOBREW ZYMATIC

$2000* / picobrew.com

You've grown your own veg, baked your own bread and milked the odd llama but the holy grail remains: brewing your own beer. Unlike the chemistry set that's usually required, PicoBrew's internet-enabled Zymatic system automatically adds the ingredients based on the recipe you've chosen and brews it up in about four hours, then starts fermenting.

GROHE K7 F-DIGITAL

₹poa / grohe.com/in

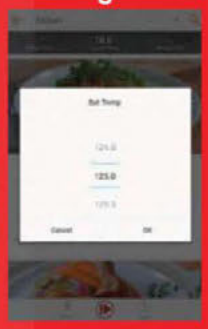
If you're a kitchen wizard who likes it all to be at the right celsius, tap water included, look no further. Install this tap and wireless controller onto your sink and preset your ideal combination of water temperature, flow pressure and duration. A ring of coloured light will give you visual feedback as you move from cold to hot, so there'll be no surprises.

ANOVA PRECISION COOKER

$230* / anovaculinary.com

***Sous vide* might sound like the name of that old teacher you didn't pay enough attention to in French class, but if you had you might know it actually means 'under vacuum'. It's a method of cooking that involves sealing food in bags and cooking it slowly in warm water — and Anova's Bluetooth-equipped Precision Cooker adds a pinch of tech.**

It heats and swirls the water around like a whirlpool to ensure a consistent temperature throughout the pot, plus it comes with an app (obviously) that lists a load of recipes to choose from, automatically setting the time and temperature based on what you pick. Or if you want to go off-menu and cook something exotic — puffin, for example — you can adjust it yourself. What comes out should be evenly cooked and juicier than the tales from Del Monte's stag do.



AND ANOVA THING...

ONE *Sous vide* is all about accuracy, so the Precision Cooker can control the temperature right down to the nearest tenth of a degree.

TWO The Precision Cooker is placed at one side of the pot and held in place by an adjustable clamp, so you can use any size container.

THREE You can *sous vide* your way into a drunken haze with the app's cocktails, including bacon-infused bourbon and limoncello.

XYZ PRINTING 3D FOOD PRINTER

3D printers normally churn out small plastic knick-knacks or vital cogs for complex machinery, but what if you could use one to turn your kitchen into a delicious production line that'd make even Willy Wonka jealous?

XYZPrinting wants you to do exactly that with its kitchen-counter-friendly 3D food printer. You fill it with dough rather than plastic, which is squeezed out into oven-ready creations, including dinosaur-shaped treats and pastries.

Its cloud-based recipe book means you don't need to be a masterchef to sculpt them (though you will need to do the actual baking). Users can even submit their own creations to XYZ's database — where they are vetted, presumably to prevent genital-shaped biscuits flooding the world's office bake sales.

A/V CAVERN

With the last signs of life finally leaving the corpse of 3D TV, it's time to prepare your living room for the next revolution, and 4K has its feet well and truly under the coffee table (the new Ikea one, with the wireless charging panels). So what other ear and eyeball-pleasers can we expect to take root in the lounge in the not-too-distant future?

Virtual reality might be gaming's next big thing but, for socialising in the living room, things might sometimes need to be a little more inclusive than disappearing inside a helmet on a journey to an entirely new world.

The Immersis (immersisvr.com) is an augmented reality projector that projects way beyond the limits of your TV; it also uses 3D mapping to incorporate the surrounding walls. And it's not just for gaming either: you can also feed it videos and photos to give them the all-walls treatment. It's Full HD rather than 4K, which means there aren't as many pixels to play with as we'd like, but if your telly's too small and you don't have a wall suitable for a standard projector, then an Immersis could fulfil all your home cinema dreams. Unless you have ₹10crores lying around, in which case you can upgrade those dreams to include your own IMAX screen, complete with dual 4K projectors, a proprietary surround sound system and 200 pre-loaded films.

SHARP AQUOS BEYOND 4K ULTRA HD TV

₹tba / sharp.com

Sharp heard you like pixels, so it put pixels inside its pixels so you can pixel while you pixel. What that really means is there are 66 million sub-pixels beyond the standard 3840x2160 resolution, which boost it to something approaching 8K. And you thought finding stuff to watch in 4K was difficult...

3D SOUND LABS NEOH

₹20,390 (approx) / 3dsoundlabs.com

Try wearing your surround sound system and you'll end up with a very cumbersome hat, so these headphones are probably a better option. They use motion sensors and head-tracking tech to replicate surround sound that reacts to where you look. It currently only works with iThings, but Android and PC support is on the way.

DEVIALET PHANTOM

₹tba / audire.in

Still playing CDs on an old hi-fi? Get yourself to a museum, grandad. Devialet's Phantom might look like an ancient contraption that holds the key to eternal life but its Wi-Fi streaming from phones, PCs and Macs, or direct from the web, hi-res capabilities and multiroom potential prove it's definitely more interested in bringing life to your ears.

ZAPPITI PLAYER 4K

₹30,500 / keihifi.com

Chances are there'll never be a disc format for 4K, so streamers such as this one will be your route in. Netflix's 4K shows only work on certain TVs for now but the Zappiti Player's Android OS means it'll be ready when they are. In the meantime its hard-drive hole takes anything up to 6TB – plenty of space – and it also supports Dolby's sound-bouncing Atmos audio tech.

ROTO VR

from ₹20,000 / rotovr.com

As long as most of us have furniture, pets and other humans clogging up our homes, dodging zombies with a VR headset on is going to be problematic.

Roto VR puts you on a motorised pedestal that physically rotates you when your character does, reducing the risk of motion sickness. A footpad adds pedals to control movement – such as acceleration and braking in a car, plane or spaceship – although the Roto VR remains in place rather than scooting back and forth across the carpet like a rideable Roomba. A table can also be added for a steering wheel or other input device – perfect for *EVE: Valkyrie*.

Whatever you're playing (or watching) can also take control of the plinth's movement and spin you around to face whatever ghastly scene the director wants you to. At least you can have a little sit down afterwards.

ALTERNATIVELY...

MMONE ₹tba / mm-company.com
Got room to swing a Maine Coon? Then you'll want this part gaming peripheral, part theme-park ride: a VR chair that works with an Oculus Rift and rotates in every direction.

3

WE'RE ON THE ROTO NOWHERE

ONE You can remove your office chair's wheels and clip it into the Roto VR. If nothing else, it's a good way of getting through that mid-afternoon lull without resorting to biscuits.

TWO Most VR headsets still require you to be tethered to a PC, so isn't that going to cause a tangle? Not with Roto VR's special adapter, which has a slip ring to prevent snarlups.

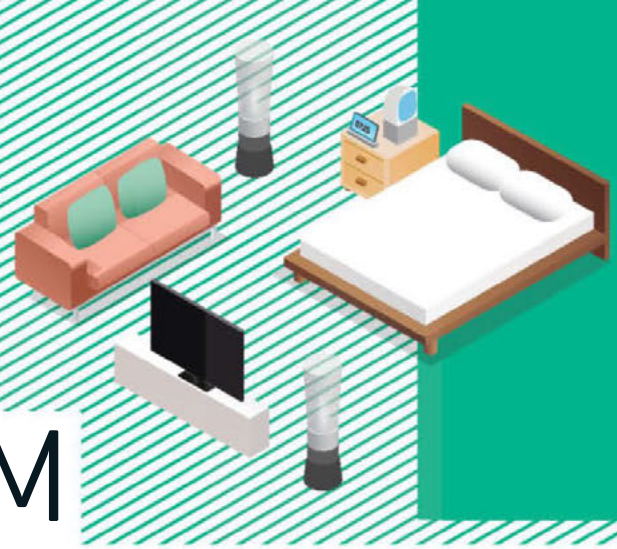
THREE It's also been future-proofed with Bluetooth, so when wireless headsets emerge you'll still be able to use them with the Roto VR. That also means you can use it with Samsung's Gear VR straight away.

A SIMPLER RIVAL TO ATMOS

If the thought of ripping up your home cinema system and starting all over again for Dolby Atmos sounds as appealing as a *Twilight* marathon with Nigel Farage, there's soon to be another, much less drastic way.

Unlike Atmos, which requires some fancy new upward-firing speakers in your setup to bounce sound off the ceiling, DTS:X offers similarly object-based surround sound, but does so using your existing speakers. Chances are it won't have quite the same sense of immersion as Atmos, but it'll require a lot less mucking about.

It also means you won't have to rearrange your entire lounge to ensure you can laser-position the speakers in exactly the spots the Atmos system dictates. According to DTS, its remapping engine can cope with pretty much any placement as long as it's within a hemispherical layout, plus it'll work with anything from 5.1 to 11.2 configurations. Onkyo, Denon, Marantz and Pioneer are already on board, with firmware updates to existing amps on the way this year.



BEDROOM + BATHROOM

You spend a third of your life asleep. If you think about it, that's a lot of time wasted that could be spent fiddling with your phone, so you owe it to yourself to make sure there's enough tech in your bedroom that'll allow you to do plenty of phone-fiddling when you wake up in the morning.

Right now the bedroom is dominated by tech that draws your blinds, dims your lights, regulates your air-conditioning, tracks your slumber, monitors your tossing and turning, and does what it can to help you to get a good night's sleep.

What began with simple apps that monitored how well you slept using your phone's built-in sensors, such as Sleep Cycle for iOS and SleepBot for Android, has developed into far more sophisticated standalone gadgets. Wearables such as Misfit's Shine (from ₹7099 / amazon.in) took it to the next level, but if you prefer to spend your nights *au naturel* there are now gadgets that don't need to cling to your body to know what's happening.

Withings' Aura ($300* / amazon.com) is a bedside lamp that connects to a sensor positioned under the mattress, feeding back info on your sleep patterns and activating special lighting patterns to help you wake up naturally, rather than as if you've just had a gorilla slide into bed next to you.

MILAGROW WHEEME

₹9990 / flipkart.com

It may sound creepy on paper, but it'll be the best thing to have ever crawled on your body, trust us. Lie down, place WheeMe on your back or tummy and turn it on (yes, we mean *switch* it on). This little masseuse will slowly roll along your skin without falling off or losing grip, giving you feels ranging from soothing vibration to delightful tickle, as per your liking.

SONY SYMPHONIC LIGHT

₹tba / sony.co.in

Convergence has slowed down somewhat since the smartphone became the 21st-century Swiss Army knife, but Sony has combined a speaker with a lamp and kicked the whole thing off again. The sound is pushed through the glass so when it's not playing tunes it looks like any normal lamp. What next, a sofa that's also a blender?

DIABETO

₹2000 / diabe.to

If you're diabetic, this little bird can be your new BFF. Simply insert it into your glucometer every time you take a reading, and the device will transfer the data onto your smartphone. This will then be pushed onto a secure cloud server and can be accessed via your Diabeto web or mobile app (₹free, Android). There's plans to bring a panel of doctors on board for tele-consultations.

WITHINGS SMART BODY ANALYZER

₹17,158 / amazon.in

As its name suggests, the Smart Body Analyzer does way more than just tell you you've eaten too many cupcakes. As well as your weight, it'll measure your heart rate through your feet, work out your body fat and BMI, and even monitor the quality of the air, before feeding everything back to its Android or iOS app.

RESMED S+

$99.99* / amazon.com

There are few things creepier than the thought of someone watching you while you sleep, but that's exactly how ResMed's S+ works. It sits by your bed and observes your slumber without any contact whatsoever, using sonar-type tech to work out when your body moves, picking up everything from rolling over to the expansion of your chest as your breathe in and out. It's like living with a medically trained, highly conscientious bat.

The S+ also has sensors to monitor light, noise and temperature in the room, which it combines with your movement data to produce a personalised sleep report that you can view on your phone with the S+ app (₹free / iOS, Android). The app will then use that info to offer you tips on how to kip better — ones that don't include your usual series of pre-bedtime brandies.

ADD THIS...

TECHNOGYM ARTIS ₹poa / technogym.com/in
It's a Google glass-controlled treadmill. Need we say more? Okay – you can control the speed via voice commands, see running data on the headset and communicate with a personal trainer via a webcam. And of course, run on it too.

THE ULTIMATE NIGHT LIGHT

ONE The S+ also functions as a smart alarm clock that'll use your sleep pattern to wake you up when you're not in deep sleep.

TWO To help you on your journey to the land of nod, the S+ can play sounds to sync your breathing with, helping you relax and making it easier to drift off.

THREE It even has a Mind Clear function, which thankfully isn't an EMP brainwipe but a voice recorder that allows you to get anything that's bothering you off your chest before snuggling down.

IN THE BATH

GROHE F-DIGITAL DELUXE
₹poa / grohe.com/in
This system allows you to not only control the water temperature, but also add light, sound and steam to your shower cabin via the touchscreen or iOS app. Mmmm, yes, steam it up.

ROCA KHROMACLIN
₹2,74,635 / roca.in
Adjustable spout and water temperature, night light, auto-lifting lid and programmed flush (using proximity detection) and heated seat with a soft lid make this a hot pot. Yes, there's a remote control and touchscreen too.

FITBIT ARIA
₹9990 / amazon.in
Aria not only measures but also helps you track your weight, BMI and body fat levels by tapping into your home Wi-Fi and uploading your data to fitbit.com each time you step on the scale.

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OPINION

TOM WIGGINS
DEPUTY EDITOR
(STUFF UK)

Why communication is the key to the robo-home

Between the start of this feature and the page you're reading now, there's been a lot of very capable gadgets that allow you to take control of your home in ways never before possible, but they also have one thing in common: they don't really work that well together. While we've obviously come a long way from the electric bread knife and envying of the wonders of an Innovations catalogue from abroad, much of the home tech available at the moment exists in a world of its own, unable to communicate much further than to an accompanying app on the phone in your pocket.

But there are some signs of a change. Nest (**1**), now owned by Google, has opened up its API to allow other tech, such as Philips Hue lightbulbs and August's and Kevo's (**2**) respective smart locks, to talk to its thermostat and smoke alarm so they know when you're not there and react accordingly; while Apple's forthcoming HomeKit (**3**) platform is compatible with Honeywell thermostats, Withings' connected-home products (**4**) and many more to come.

HomeKit was announced at last year's WWDC, Apple's big developer shindig, and chances are this year's event will deliver more info on exactly how far its tentacles will stretch, how it'll work with Siri and your Apple Watch, and when it will be available. Having had a year to work on apps and compatible products, the hope is we'll see some Apple-flavoured home tech in the next month or so and, fingers crossed, it'll reach our sub-continent's shores soon too.

THE HOME STRAIGHT

But Apple is hardly renowned for playing nicely with others, and that means Nest won't be on the list. Some products will work with both platforms but the problem is the systems themselves won't work together. What's developing appears to be a classic tech format war between the two platforms, and the only people who benefit from those are the winner's accountants. There are other competitors too: the AllSeen Alliance has over 140 backers for its AllJoyn system, including Qualcomm, LG and Sony, and the Open Interconnect Consortium is backed by Intel and Samsung.

What we're left with is (at least) four different systems vying to become the universal standard for connected home kit, each with its own manufacturers attached – albeit with some crossover. Until the whole home is speaking the same language, we'll never be able to make the next step towards genuine automation.

If a house really is a machine for living in, the engine's coughing and spluttering because nobody's quite sure what to fuel it with... but after a bit of tuning we could soon have it purring sweetly.

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MWC SHANGHAI 2015 >>

'Cos a solitary Mobile World Congress just isn't enough, we hopped over to Shanghai to see what this new MWC was all about. And guess what! We came across quite a few nifty little doodads that we hope will soon make their way over to India

HEALTHY KAT
Fitkat Ultimo

The Ultimo counts your steps and tracks how much you sleep, but also adds in a few new features – an SOS alarm and a pill alert that reminds you when it's time to take your medication.
fitkat.me

FOR THE RENAISSANCE MAN
XYZ Printing da Vinci Jr

The da Vinci Jr is as plug-and-play as can be. Load it up with filament, connect it to your PC and start printing away snazzy coasters for your new bachelor pad.
xyzprinting.com

ROGER THAT, AGENT 007
WhiteLynx Headset

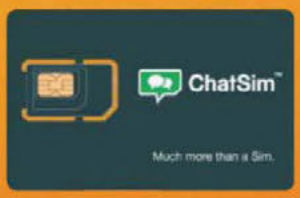
Military-grade hardware encryption means that the pesky NSA will never figure out your plans for the big date over the weekend. Now, where'd we keep our black suits and dark shades.
whitelynx.co

GOOD VIBRATIONS
Oaxis Bento

Place your phone on the tray and then sit back and rock out as the Bento's electromagnetic induction sensors and passive bass radiators work their magic. 'Wireless-less'? We approve.
oaxis.com

[Words Vaibhav Sharma]

Collavo
Edit your vacation videos right at the beach. Add real-time effects, filters, text and audio clips from their library, and even collaborate with your pals. Available for iOS and Android.



ChatSim
This global chatting SIM lets you stay in touch with friends back home, no matter where you are. Apps supported include BBM, WhatsApp, Viber, Tango, Facebook Messenger, Line, WeChat...

SPACEY-STYLEY
MyKronoz ZeBracelet2

With its space-age looks, this is one tasty tracker indeed. But it's more than just a pretty face: You get it all – sleep and step tracking, notifications, health goals, reminders, alarms and more.
mykronoz.com

BREATHE EASY, DUDE
FooBot

The Foobot monitors indoor air quality by tracking stuff like particulates, carbon monoxide and humidity. Great, now we'll know when to bust out those Army surplus gas masks.
foobot.io

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE
Oaxis Vita

This smart water bottle alerts you when it's time for your next sip. It even has a display showing the water temperature and your body moisture content. But does it work with beer?
oaxis.com

TRAVELLIN' THEATRE
UO Smart Beam Laser

This wireless pocket projector uses laser diodes to throw out a 720p, 60 lumens picture. The 4200mAh battery gives you 2 hours of screen time – just enough for a movie!
uobeam.com

Heady metal

It's time to meet one of 2015's most important phones: this is HTC's Android flagship, and it's one of the most desirable handsets ever made

from ₹57,000* (approx) / htc.com

HTC really hit the bullseye with the One and One M8. No surprise, then, that it hasn't rocked the boat too much with this year's model, the unsurprisingly named One M9, which it's hoping can take an early lead in the 2015 flagship phone race – and stay there.

It has the same values, a similar design; and like its daddy, it doesn't try to pack in quite as much future tech as the practically overflowing Galaxy S6. But maybe that's no bad thing, and there are plenty of little tweaks instead.

The M8's UltraPixel camera was amazing in low light but low on detail; the One M9 fixes that by switching out the sensor for a 'normal' 20.7MP one, and moving the light-gulping UltraPixel sensor to the front. The latter is perfect for selfies, if you must take them, because it doesn't need a flash.

The button layout has also been improved, there's more software customisation on offer and all the brains have been schooled-up to 2015 standards. But the rest is classic HTC One style all the way.

That means you get a phone that feels flat-out amazing, speakers much fuller-sounding than any of Samsung's and a classy-looking but highly customisable interface. Will that be enough for it to work its way into our affections? And how long can it stay ahead of the pack?

48 hours with the HTC One M9

- Good
- Meh
- Evil

Time	Note
1min	Aha, nano SIM. Make sure you have one before your M9 arrives, folks
5mins	Yet again, HTC has made a phone that feels a million dollars. Amazing stuff
15mins	It's much the same size as the M8, but the power button's easier to reach
30mins	Ooh-err, the new themes let you apply all sorts of interface styles
1hr	It may not be super-slim but the M9 really slides into a pocket nicely
3hrs	These BoomSounds are the best for blasting out podcasts in the park
5hrs	It gets a bit toasty when you start pushing the CPU with 3D games
8hrs	Oh, the dreaded Google Play Services are draining the battery a fair bit
15hrs	Battery getting a bit low. This isn't a three-day-stamina dreamphone
24hrs	The detail in 20MP daylight photos is superb...

INTERACTIVE SECTION
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE BLIPPAR ICON
DOWNLOAD BLIPPAR APP
FILL SCREEN WITH PAGE
SEE IT COME TO LIFE!

1 Hello, metal
It's not a huge design departure from the One M8. The curvy brushed aluminium shell is still there, now with a natty two-tone finish: silvery back, low-key gold on the sides. It feels fantastic, and as the screen is a sensible five inches, it isn't a real palm-stretcher.

2 Boom for your temples
Sound is one of the HTC's greatest assets. The One M9 has great front-facing stereo speakers: the BoomSound twins. They get you much deeper, fuller sound than most phones. And new for this year is Dolby DSP, which makes it sound even more expansive.

3 Make it snappy
The M9 has one of this year's top processors, the 64-bit Snapdragon 810. It gets you eight cores and absolutely loads of power. However, it does kick out a fair bit of heat. The back of the phone can get pretty warm when you start doing anything particularly taxing.

4 No way, 2K
HTC has not been suckered into any of those screen fads. Outdoor visibility is improved since the early days, but the One M9 has a 1080p LCD screen just like its predecessor, not a super-duper high-res QHD one. There's not a huge difference, though: it's a corker.

5 Talking Sense
On top of Android 5.0 Lollipop, the M9 uses a custom interface called HTC Sense. Bits worth a mention include its themes, letting you give it a one-button facelift, and a smart widget that switches around the apps on your home screen depending on where you are.

Tech specs

Screen 5in, 1080x1920 SLCD3
Processor Octo-core Snapdragon 810
OS Android Lollipop 5.0 with Sense 7
Camera 20.7MP rear with dual-LED flash, 4MP front **Battery** 2840mAh (non-removable)
Storage 32GB with microSD **RAM** 3GB
Dimensions 145x70x9.6mm, 157g

Photographic whizz?

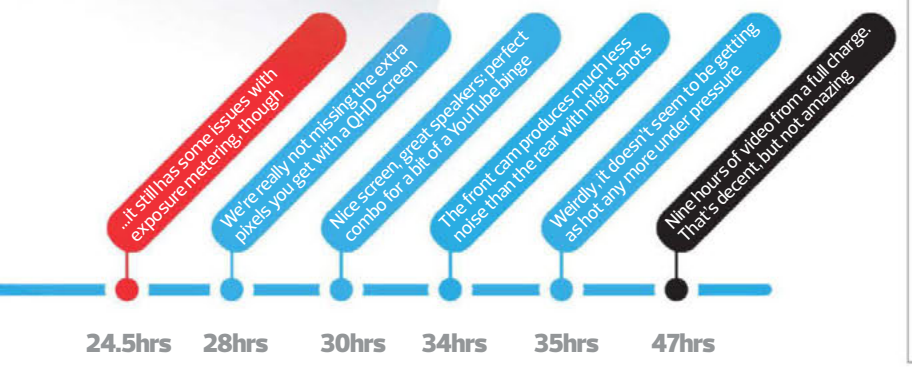
HTC has swapped UltraPixels for standard (but lots more) megapixels on its main camera. Smart move?

The big snapper
Going from a 4MP camera to a 20.7MP one gets you loads more detail, but a slightly more pedestrian low-light performance. Plus the processing isn't perfect: some post-shoot tweaks go a long way.

The selfie snapper
The front camera is only really good for selfies as it won't focus on far-away objects, but it's possibly the best selfie camera yet. You get decent details and great versatility when the light is low.

Easy themey
The smart theme-maker custom-builds your M9's look around any photo, analysing its tones to inform the colour scheme of the rest of the interface. Maximum creativity, minimum effort.

The rest of the pack
Of course, it's not the only smart-snapper out there: other superphones are sniffing at its heels, and the Panasonic CM1's huge sensor could have it licked. But the snapper on the M9 is pretty good.



If you're waiting for a phone revolution, the HTC One M9 is not it. It's a thoughtful, considered refinement on what is one of the finest phones there's ever been, and that's enough to make it the early front-runner in the 2015 flagship phone race. Only time will tell how long it stays there.
@stuff_india

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
An early contender for 2015 phone of the year, the M9 is a real class act

All I have to do is stream

Is Sony's miniature box of game-to-TV streaming tricks the sidekick your PS4 needs, or a frustrating missed opportunity?

₹9990 / sony.co.in

When *Stuff* gave the PlayStation 4 its five-star review in October 2013, its Remote Play features stood out as a sign of a console with big plans for the future. But unless you're a Vita owner (there are some out there, right?), it's a nifty function that's so far gone largely unused.

Now we have PlayStation TV – a tiny box that allows you to replicate your PS4's screen on another TV in the house by streaming it over your home network. It also has enough oomph on board to play a truly massive selection of Vita, PSP and PSone games.

So... is it the PS4's first must-have accessory?

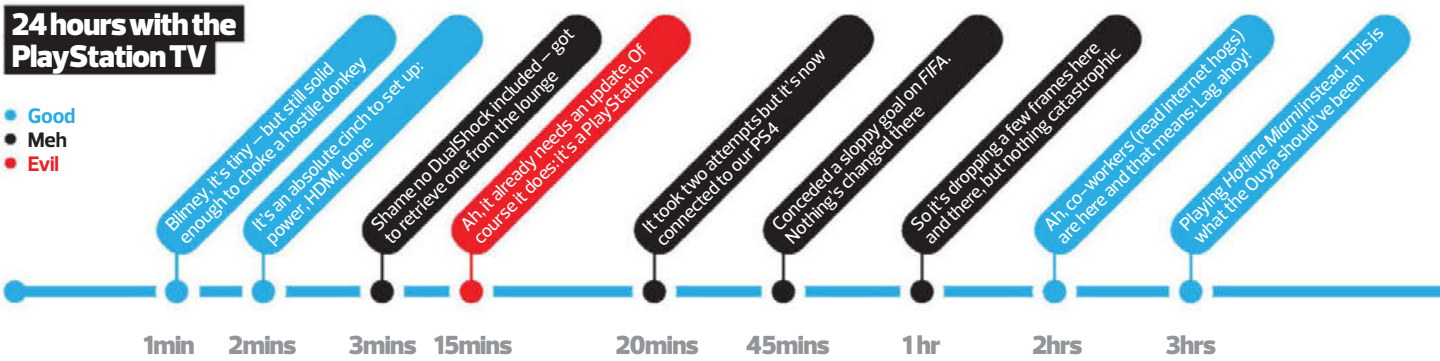
1 Livin' la Vita loca
PlayStation TV is essentially a Vita without the screen, controls or battery. It's tiny. You plug it into your telly and use a DualShock 3 or 4 controller to navigate Vita-style menus. Sony recommends you connect via Ethernet but we used Wi-Fi, because this might well end up in a room where Ethernet cables are not welcome.

2 Better latency than never
With the network doing minimal heavy lifting, it streams from the PS4 without much fuss, although it can take more than one attempt to make the initial connection. There's a hint of latency but nothing that makes it unplayable. We could play *FIFA 15* without it affecting our finely tuned one-touch passing too much.

3 Game interrupted
Online, we had more trouble. Playing *FIFA* against a friend felt a bit like we (or our starting 11) had been for a few pints, with reaction times of the players to our input noticeably slower. Not great for competitive multiplayer, then, but great for continuing your *Far Cry 4* campaign when you're kicked off the main TV.

24 hours with the PlayStation TV

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



Tech

CPU ARM Cortex-A9 Core (quad-core)
GPU IMG SGX543MP4+
Connectivity Wi-Fi, Ethernet, Bluetooth, USB, HDMI
Storage 1GB
Output 720p/1080i
Dimensions 65x105x13.6mm, 110g

It's not just about gaming

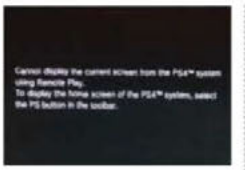
Your PS4 does way more than just play games, so that must be true of PlayStation TV too, right? Er...

Size matters

The black box isn't much to look at but it makes other boxes look quite chunky. Plus it weighs just enough that you won't think you've spent ₹10K on a box of random wires and magic fluff.

Stingy streaming

Movies and shows from the PlayStation Store are currently available in the UK only, and even then they're only in SD. Try to fire up Netflix or iPlayer from the PS4 and you'll just get an error message.



Ready or not

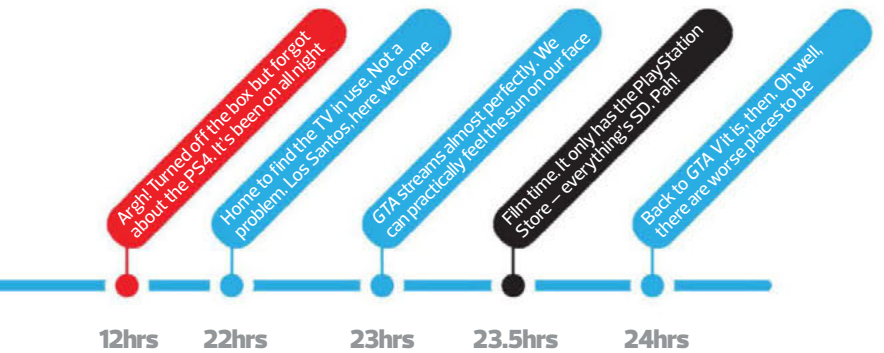
Sony says it's working on more streaming services but you can't shake the feeling that PS TV has launched unfinished. As it's been available in Japan for a year already, that's just not good enough.

Wired awake

When wired, it drops fewer frames than on Wi-Fi but the lag is'nt noticeable over either. It's still a more solid experience than you get with Remote Play on the Vita or Sony Xperia Z3 Tablet Compact.

4 Space invaders
As a standalone micro-console, it does a decent job. There's a slot for any Vita games you already own, plus a whole catalogue of old PlayStation games to download. But with *Fez* and *Hotline Miami* taking up over 600MB of its 1GB storage, you're going to run out of room before you can say "there's a card slot for expandable storage".

5 Any port in a storm
Without any work to port games to a non-touchscreen device, the transition isn't entirely seamless. *Hotline Miami*, which we'd previously bought for the Vita, made references to 'dragging the screen' which didn't have much effect on our ageing TV. You have to wonder if it's worth buying a second-hand PS3 instead.



PlayStation TV's USP is second-screen gaming and there's nothing else out there like it. If your TV is regularly contested territory and you have a sturdy network, this is a much easier option than unplugging your PS4 whenever you don't win custody of the living room. Whether that's worth ₹9990 is a different matter entirely. *@stuff_india*

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆
The potential is there but PlayStation TV doesn't do enough to justify its price tag

New dog, old tricks

The Xperia Z3 was one of our favourite phones last year. So, of course, the moment we got our hands on the Z3+, it was put to The Test

₹55,990 / sonymobile.com/in

As a society, we're in thrall to the thrill of the new. We expect our phones to arrive touting amazing new features and when they don't – as is the case with the Sony Xperia Z3+ – our natural reaction is to be disappointed. In some ways that's a little unfair.

After all, the Z3 was a mighty fine phone that really didn't need much improving and yet, the Z3+ has lost a bit of bulk in every direction, but the notable changes aren't about millimetre-measuring. Sony has really cut the Sony Xperia Z3+ style back, making it as pure and simple as possible. Lots of people seem to be a bit disappointed with the Sony Xperia Z3+'s lack of jazz-hands extras, but we found its design to be solid. The edges are still a mite sharp, but you get used to that after about five minutes. We got to compare it side-by-side with the Xperia Z2, and the Z3+ really makes that older phone look a bit of a mess.

Maybe giving it a bigger battery, slightly new design and new processor was all Sony needed to do? Problem is, this year's already welcomed a couple of fantastic new phones in the form of the Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge, and the LG G4. And in that company, a minor upgrade was always going to be a hard sell.

1 Hypercolour
Z3+ touts a 5.2in LCD display of 1920 x 1080 resolution. Like the HTC One M9, Sony hasn't made the leap to QHD, but with 424 pixels packed into each inch of the screen, it's still very sharp. What really defines the display on the Xperia Z3+ though, is the lively colour.

2 All day, every day
The battery prowess of Z3+ comfortably tops the LG G4, generally leaving you with around 30-40% charge left by bedtime to sail you into the second day with no worries. In fact, along with the Samsung Galaxy S6, the Z3+ seems to have the best staying power of all the big-name 2015 flagships.

3 Easy on the eyes
Sony's custom UI is better-looking than LG's and a bit more consistent than Samsung's. It's simple too, doesn't jam in extra home screens or try to pack the notifications drop-down with more controls than an airplane cockpit. Feels grown up and doesn't bog the system down one bit.

4 Racehorse
Performance is just about perfect. Multi-tasking is a joy. Of course, there'd be no excuse for lag given the Sony Xperia Z3+'s insides – It has a Snapdragon 810 CPU with 3GB RAM, and scores 3374 in Geekbench 3: a pretty decent total.

5 Megapixel Monster
The Xperia Z3+ has a 20-megapixel camera that, 95% of the time, takes 8-megapixel images, using the extra sensor info to make those 8MP images that bit cleaner and more accurate. It deals with the lows well, but doesn't hit the high points reached by the LG G4 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

Tech specs

Screen 5in, 1920x1080p LCD
Processor Octa-core Snapdragon 810
OS Android Lollipop 5.0 with Custom UI
Camera 20.7MP rear with single-LED flash, 5MP front **Battery** 2930mAh (non-removable)
Storage 32GB with microSD **RAM** 3GB
Dimensions 146x72x6.9mm, 144g

The good, the average and the ugly

The Z3+ does most things well but makes a hot mess of one particular issue

Aquaman
The Xperia Z3+ is water resistant and no longer needs any idiotic flaps the previous iterations featured – It's still IP65/68 certified, meaning it can be dunked in water for 30 minutes.

Media Hoarder
Most of the 2015 flagships are sadly moving away from expandable storage. Not trusty Sony though. The Z3+ comes with 32GB on-board storage, expandable upto 128 gigs.

Speakeasy
The Sony Xperia Z3+ speakers don't impress too much. They're not terrible, but just don't have the extra bit of mid-range bulk we're starting to expect from higher-end phones.

Miami Heat
There is a serious issue with overheating that has been acknowledged by Sony and its supposed to get better later this year. Gaming and shooting in 4K in particular get the centigrades going.

That Snapdragon 810 CPU causes the Sony Xperia Z3+'s biggest problem: overheating. The photo side also falls behind the competition from Samsung and LG. Still, that battery life remains class-leading, while its classy UI and a super-bold larger-than-life screen deserve to win it a healthy crop of fans. Maybe just not quite as big a crop as it would without those flaws. *@stuff_india*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆
A solid and likeable phone with great battery life but overheating issues keep it from the top of the pile

Bebop is rock steady

With drones set to take off in a big way this year, is Parrot's affordable flyer just the thing to sweep you into the world of high-altitude frolics?

from ₹55,790 / ebay.in

DJI's 4K-filming Inspire 1 might be the poster drone for our new airborne overlords, but Parrot's Bebop is the one you'll realistically see taking off from a garden near you. It's a supercharged version of 2010's AR.Drone, with built-in GPS and a better camera, capable of shooting 14MP stills and Full HD video – and at ₹55,790 it's within the reach of most wallets.

To fly it you need an Android or iOS device and Parrot's FreeFlight 3 app (₹free), which talks to the drone's own Wi-Fi connection. Simply hit 'Take Off' and it'll rise to 2m off the ground and hover, waiting for further instructions.

So is this a serious UAV, a filmmaker's dream or an expensive radio-controlled toy? Let's fire up the rotors and find out...

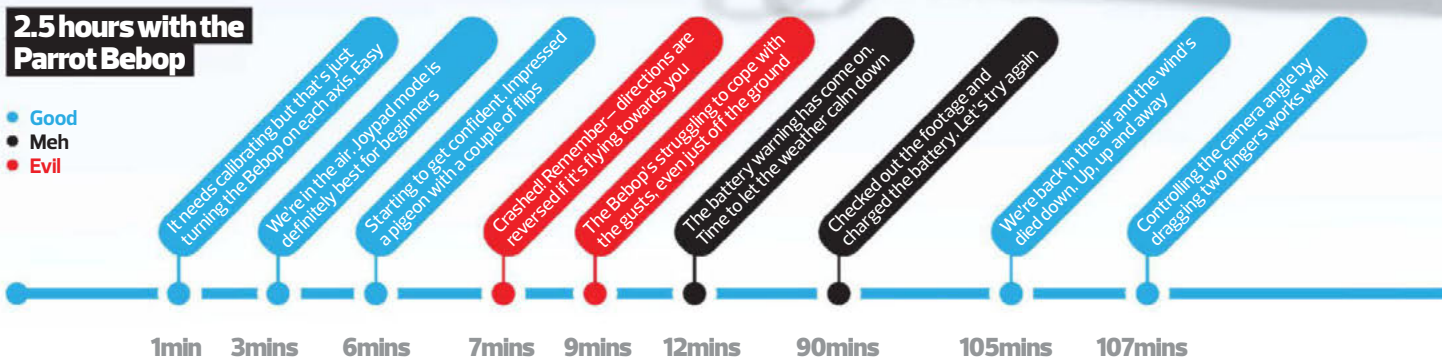
1 Control freq
The Parrot Bebop's altitude and rotation are controlled by a virtual thumbstick, but Joypad mode adds a second one to control the drone's lateral movement. Ace and Normal modes use tilt control, which takes some getting used to but allows you to keep your eyes on the Bebop rather than always glancing down at the touchscreen.

2 Exposure exposed
The camera struggles a bit with exposure on videos, particularly when changing altitude. This is particularly noticeable if it's a bit overcast, but in clear blue skies the footage looks great, plus it's steady as a rock. Blow it up for a big screen and edges start to fuzz a bit, but when viewed on an iPad you don't notice.

3 Rangefinder
You can set a height limit on the Bebop that goes all the way up to 150m. That's actually the safe limit to fly it, and it's also way beyond the Wi-Fi range. At just over 60m up our iPad Mini lost signal with the Bebop, resulting in a tricky moment that ended with it landing in a thorny hedge. Ouch.

2.5 hours with the Parrot Bebop

- Good
- Meh
- Evil

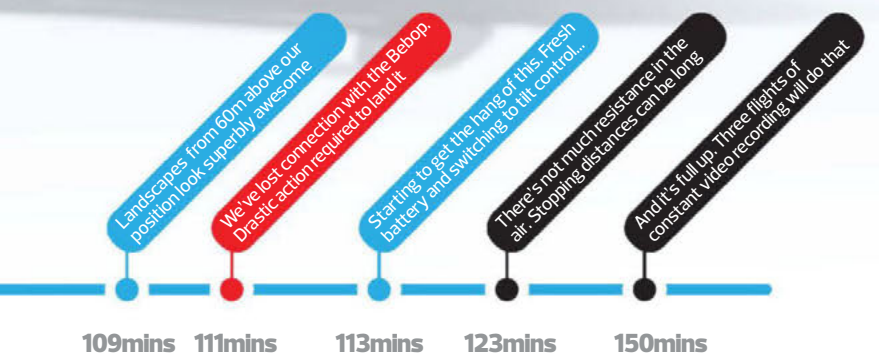


Tech specs

Camera 14MP
Video 1920x1080, 30fps
Storage 8GB
Top speed 13m/s
Dimensions 33x38x3.6cm (with hull)
Weight 410g (with battery and hull)

4 Homeward bound
With GPS now built-in, the Bebop should theoretically be able to find its way back to where it took off at the push of a virtual button, but when we hit 'Return to Home' it flew worryingly close to a tree, so we took over and landed it ourselves. How's that collision detection coming along, drone makers?

5 Batteries included
The Bebop comes with two batteries. Each one should give you 11 minutes of flying time but we found it could surpass that with some careful piloting (or a bit of rest while stuck in a bush). Plan your flights before take-off, and with a pit stop to change batteries, you could probably eke out close to half an hour in the air.



Captain bird's-eye

A totally new perspective: check out the Bebop's sky-high video footage of your neighbourhood

Going live
The app's default view shows a live feed from the Bebop's camera, but it often doesn't refresh fast enough to enable drone's-eye-view piloting. Those races will have to wait.

Mappy daze
If you pre-load a section of map, you can switch to a top-down satellite view that shows exactly where your Bebop is in flight... although, considering the range, it's too zoomed out to be of any real use.

Showing off
The AR.Drone's ability to do flips and rolls with just a double tap of the screen lives on, although the camera won't record them. However, the app will record telemetry data for all your flights.

Transfer deadline
You can transfer what you've shot directly to your phone or tablet over Wi-Fi. It takes ages and uses up crucial battery life, but then you can check your footage or pics without a laptop.

Just flying the Bebop is enormous fun, but it does a lot more to justify its price tag. Its photography and video skills are plenty good enough for amateur aerial auteurs, making this by far the easiest and most affordable way in to the world of sky-high surveillance. Just be aware of its limitations before you fly. *@stuff_india*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆
A user-friendly RC toy that reveals hidden depths the more you fly and film with it

GREAT DEALS ON USED MOBILES, HAPPEN ON OLX.

"I'm from Mumbai and doing my post-graduation here. One day while I was browsing the web I came across an OLX ad. I wanted to sell my one year old phone and a gaming console I'd had for a few years, so I gave it a try and put up an ad on OLX. My phone started ringing within hours of putting up the ad. I zeroed down on one person who wanted to buy the gaming console for his son and also needed to buy a mobile for himself. The mobile was in good condition and I got Rs. 2000 more for it than what the mobile shops were offering. The best thing about the transaction was that other than going off smoothly, I managed to sell both the things at a price I preferred. I was thrilled to get such amazing value for my used things. Selling through OLX was a great experience."

Anuj Nath - Mumbai

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OLX.in

Bech de

Running free

The Surge flies the banner of premium fitness bands as it attempts to hold off the onslaught of smartwatches

■ The 'sci-fi flick from the 80s' looks might be boring, but we're immensely grateful for the complete lack of neon-coloured 'sporty' highlights. More importantly, it's comfortable, and the monochrome LCD is usable even under harsh sunlight.

■ A GPS chip helps track your runs more accurately. Along with the compass and altimeter, it makes the Surge a great fit for the enthusiastic runner. Add in the LED heart rate tracker, and you're 'in the zone' (pardon our feeble attempt at runner-speak).

■ The Fitbit app is well-designed, though die-hard runners might find it a bit lightweight. Even then, between the 3rd party integration and the calorie tracking database that covers many Indian foods, it's perfectly adequate.

■ Sleep tracking is one of the niftier features of the Surge, and even though it doesn't stand out as particularly more accomplished than what everyone else gives, it's a great feature to have.

■ The advertised 7-day battery life is actually attainable, and you might even be able to overshoot. But so much as glance at the GPS, and it'll run through the battery faster than Usain Bolt having a good day.

Tech specs

Screen 1.25in monochrome LCD touchscreen
Sensors GPS, compass, altimeter, 3-axis accelerometer, 3-axis gyroscope, heart rate monitor, ambient light sensor
Water resistance 5ATM (splash proof)
App compatibility Mac, Win, iOS, Android, Windows Phone
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0
Battery type Lithium-polymer
Price ₹19,990 / fitbit.com/in

More than a fitness band

The Surge might not be as capable as a mainstream smartwatch, but you can receive call alerts and read messages without having to pull out your phone when in the middle of your weekend workout.

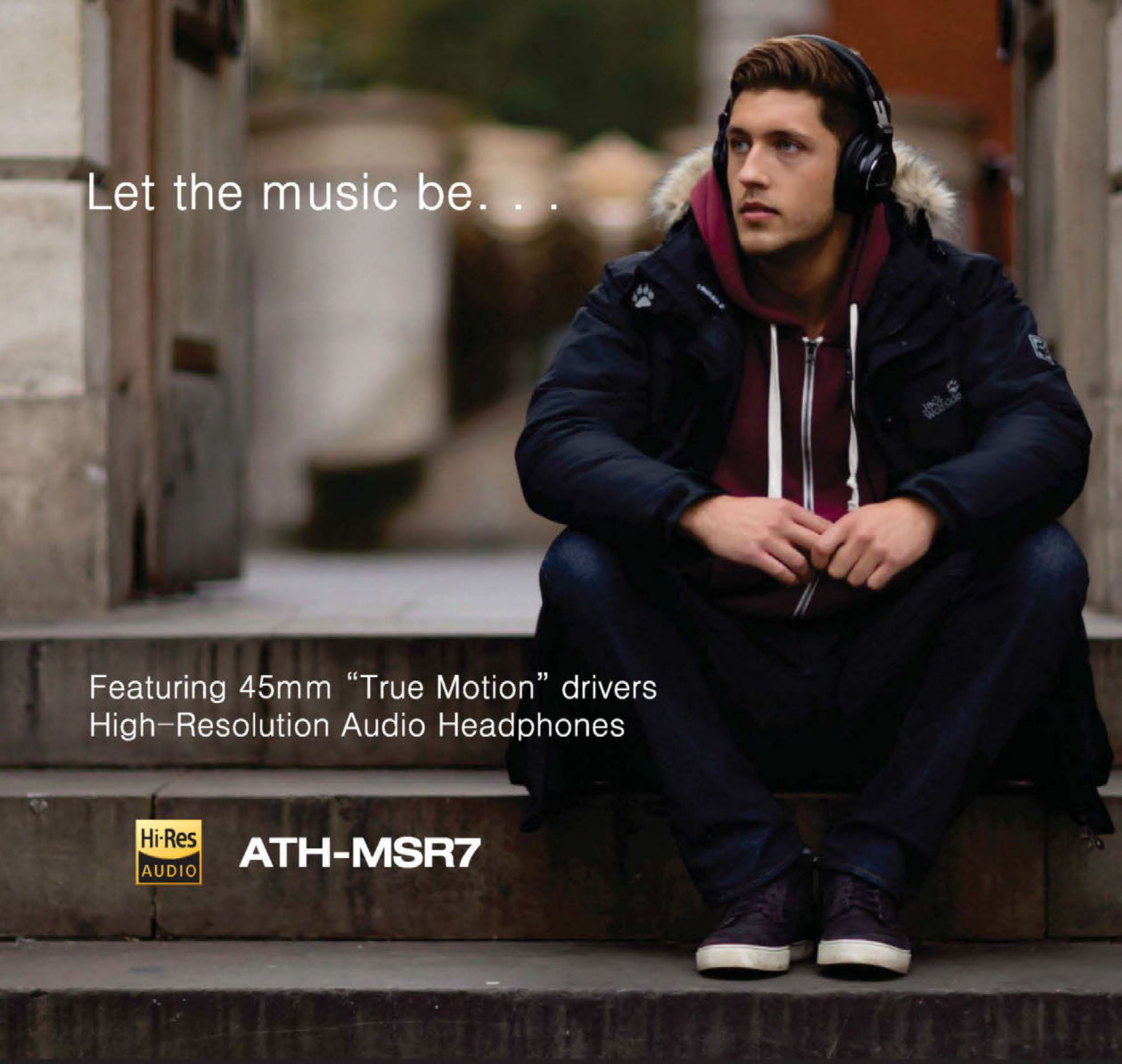
Keep the ol' ticker going

Resting on a sofa or running up a small hill, the Surge's always-on heart rate tracking feature gives you plenty of input about your fitness levels and can help guide your workout sessions.

STUFF SAYS Expensive, but makes a great fitness band for the serious runner ★★★★★

With smartwatches around, is there space for high-end fitness bands like the Surge?
@taoofdudeism

Smartwatches (or even cheaper fitness bands) will do the job just fine if you're a casual user. But that's not the point of the Surge, as it's targeted at the sort of person who treats fitness rather seriously, and likes to end the day with a run, not a greasy takeaway dinner. On the whole, continuous heart rate monitoring and GPS make this a competent runners' aid, although the app's still geared towards less-serious usage.



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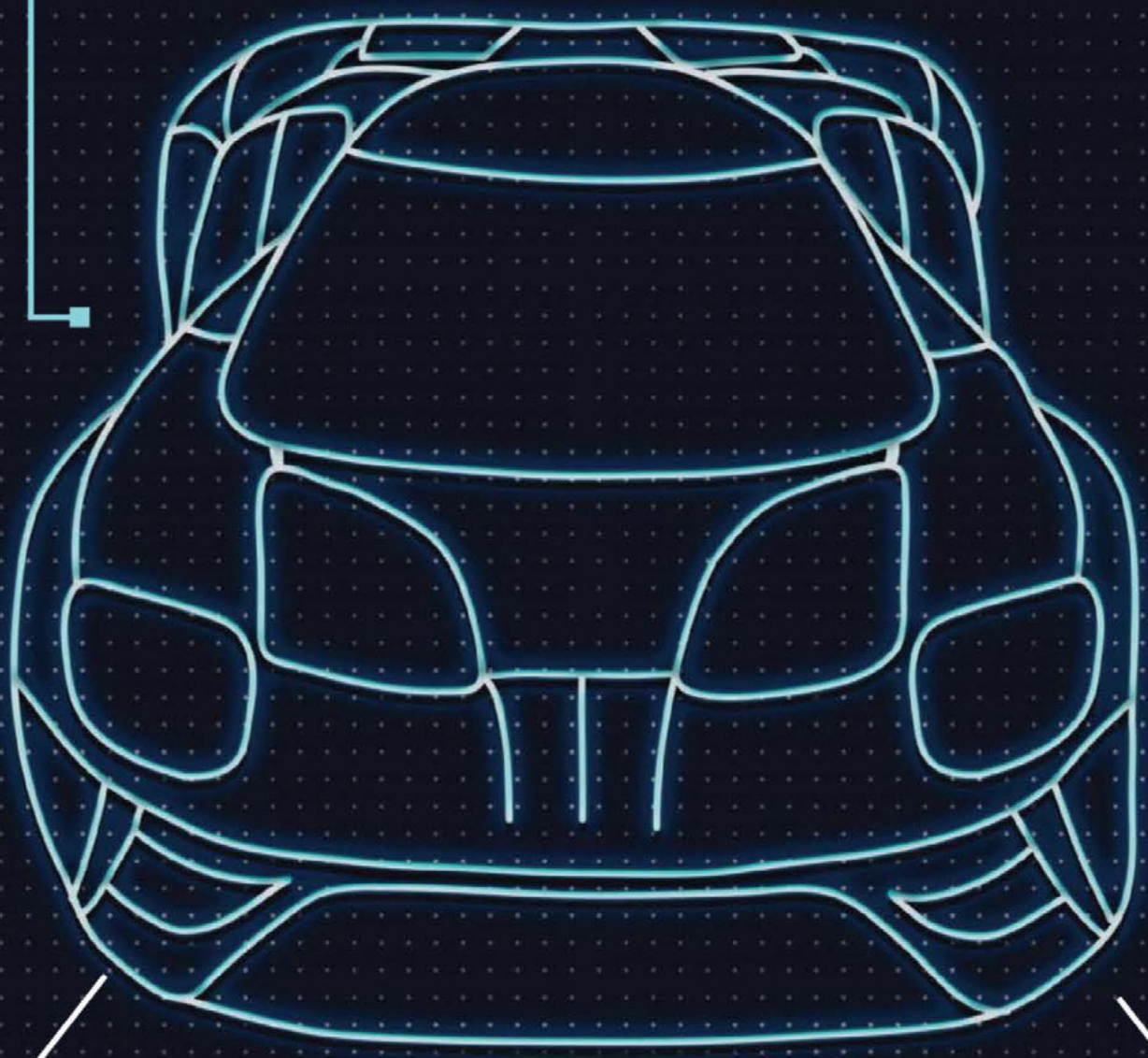
INTERACTIVE SECTION
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE BLIPPAR ICON

AUTO OF TOMORROW



Deep in the bowels of Silicon Valley, at Ford's recently opened Research and Innovation Center, you'll find an industrious set of tech folk busier than a colony of worker ants. The challenge? To find the smartest way for future humans to get around. Ask us, and we'll promptly settle on water slides as the obvious solution and call it a day. Turns out future mobility doesn't include as many Slip 'N Slides as we'd like. Sigh...

[**Words:** Farhan Kapadia **Illustrations:** Kritika Dayal]

A HEAVY DOSE OF TECH TONIC

In its quest to achieve 'Smart Mobility', Ford's taken neat concepts like autonomous driving, in-car connectivity, human-machine interface and chucked them all into the blender. The resulting experiments are a glimpse of future auto that is just as exciting for petrolheads as it is for tech junkies.

3D PRINTING GONE TURBO

Ford's no expert on printing. But the auto giant has joined hands with Redwood City-based Carbon3D (a company that's developed Continuous Liquid Interface Product tech a.k.a. CLIP). Using this tech, 3D printing can be accelerated by up to a 100 times faster than conventional methods. Resulting parts boast of mechanical properties perfectly suited for its vehicles. In fact, Ford's already produced elastomer grommets for the Focus Electric using CLIP.

AN E-BIKE THAT TRANSFORMS

MODE : FLEX

In dealing with the most congested of urban commutes, Ford's looking at multimodal mobility to find an answer. Former flagbearers of the idea, the MoDe:Me and MoDe:Pro eBikes are now joined by the newest sibling in the family: the MoDe:Flex. The nifty looking two-wheeled machine connects seamlessly with a rider's smartphone thanks to the MoDe:Link app. It then provides real-time information regarding weather, congestion, parking, public transport, etc. In fact, a new extension of the app for smartwatches puts all this delicious real-time data on the rider's wrist. We'd give anything to know of an upcoming pothole that's ready to break us.

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING

Unlike what Hollywood would like you to believe, autonomous tech is more about a safer driving experience rather than Terminators with authority problems. Ford's already equipped many of its vehicles with semi-autonomous tech – lane-departure warning, active park assist, driver assist, blind-spot monitoring and in the US. So far, none of these drivers have reported their vehicles plotting murder with other Fords.

WRIST-BOUND CAR STATS

While we're yet to find wearable tech's most essential purpose, Ford's not ignoring the new category of tech in its mission. The company's MyFord app provides its electric and hybrid vehicle users with critical stats such as driving range, battery charge and parking location. But a cool new extension for the app will soon put all that info right onto your wrist.

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Rise above your limits.
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LIVETRACK
Connected
ELEVATION
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889m
Goal
8738
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3460
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fēnix® 3
GARMIN.
For general/trade enquiries kindly contact:
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5 Scindia House, Connaught Place
New Delhi - 110001
011-23316238 +91 9811981110
info@amatostore.com
GPS India
GPS India Networks Pvt. Ltd.
D-67, Ground Floor, Defence Colony
New Delhi 110 024
011- 41740346 | 41740347
mail@gpsindia.net

WHEELS IN MOTION

As exciting as these Silicon Valley experiments may be, they've got to amount to something, right? Turns out a whole bunch of next-gen concepts and products are trickling down into our everyday lives. From P2P car-sharing to a newer version of SYNC that's eerily accurate, we're driving towards the future of auto tech at full thrust. Godspeed!

Interactive page

2016 FORD MUSTANG

SYNC 3

The 2016 Mustang appears hazy on our horizon, but we're just as excited about the SYNC 3 it'll come with. Standout features include snappy performance, conversational voice recognition and a smartphone-like touchscreen.

P2P SHARING

Peer-2-Peer Car Sharing is a pilot program for select customers in six US cities as well as London. It lets Ford Credit-financed customers rent their vehicles for pre-screened drivers for short-term use.

SPLIT-VIEW CAMS

Ford's Edge and Explorer vehicles in the US now boast of split-view cams. Using real-time video feeds from 1MP wide-angle lens cams, this tech shows its users oncoming obstacles from either side, or head on. Lifesaver!

FORD FIGO ASPIRE

The recently announced compact sedan is only so on paper. Step inside and it's a spacious little four-wheeler. Also included is Ford's premium app-link service and a programmable key to set limits on speed and audio volume.

Lap games: Style vs Substance

INTERACTIVE SECTION KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE BLIPPAR ICON

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Both these laptops provide enough grunt for gaming on the go. But one of them is more fashionista and the other is a workhorse. Which one gets the gaming gong?

MSI GT72 Dominator

What's the story?
In the early days, gamers would be ready to shed a kidney for a roaring-fast graphics card, motherboard and CPU combo. Fearless, they would treacherously overclock the hardware and pray the custom-built PC did not turn toast. Now, all of that and more is packed into a laptop.

Is it any good?
To start with, this laptop not only lets you play games with visceral visual realism that could have some Hollywood studios shudder, but also packs in a Blu-ray drive, SSD RAID 0, Gigabit LAN and a 4th-generation Intel Core i7 Processor.

We half expected the MSI GT72 to hide a 6-pack of chilled beers somewhere under the keyboard. Oh, and what a cracking piece of hardware that is, manufactured by SteelSeries, known for soul-touching mechanical gaming keyboards. You can customise the layout pattern and the colour, and thanks to the brilliant build, gaming gets more intense. What we also love about the Dominator is that it features one of the best Full HD displays we have seen yet. The black levels are simply spectacular for a laptop and it completely elevates your gaming experience, and at 17.3in wide, you won't be complaining for screen size.

There is a Blu-ray drive thrown in too, which means, you can enjoy some stellar 1080p content. The only thing that we think could have made this a better buy is the inclusion of a 4K screen and a lower price tag.

Price from ₹1,40,000 / in.msi.com
OS Windows 8.1 **Screen** 17.3in Full HD
CPU Intel Core i7 Processor,
GPU GeForce GTX 970M
RAM 8GB DDR3L(up to 32GB)
Storage Up to 512GB Super RAID 3 + 1TB HDD 7200rpm
Audio Dynaudio 2.1 channel **Connectivity** HDMI 1(v1.4), Support 4Kx2K, Multi Display 2(v1.2), Support 4Kx2K, USB 3.0 x 6

Stuff says ★★★★☆
Fantastic piece of hardware, absolutely stunning display quality, only if it was priced lower, and a 4K screen would have been swell

Acer Nitro V15 Black Edition

What's the story?
Acer decides to bring the Nitro series to India and add a dash of extra black while at it. By that, we mean the Nitro packed with an out-of-this-world Ultra HD display and the goods required to run games at those resolutions. All of that at just ₹1,10,000, which is just the base variant.

Is it any good?
Take one look at the Acer and you might not think it's a gaming beast. Subtlety is the game as far as the design of the Nitro series goes. It looks more mature than a typical, tacky gaming laptop like the MSI. Stealthy gamers would love it.

It can't touch the MSI on keyboard and trackpad performance, obviously, but you'd rather game with a proper mouse and keyboard anyway. There's also no Blu-ray player and we don't expect one at this price either. But it would be a great addition considering the gorgeous 4K display that the laptop packs. The Nitro comes with the GTX 960M, a step lower than the 970M on the MSI. But there's still enough grunt to handle even some of the heavier games out there.

Its biggest win happens to be the screen. With a proper 4K IPS display, it easily outclasses the MSI here. The colour reproduction is great and games and movies look absolutely amazing. And to seal the deal, it's ₹30,000 cheaper. Acer takes home this trophy for providing an impressive 4K gaming package at an unimaginable price.

Price from ₹1,10,000 / acer.co.in
OS Windows 8.1 **Screen** 15.6in Ultra HD LED backlit TFT LCD with IPS **CPU** Intel Core i7-4720HQ0
GPU 4GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M
RAM 12GB (upto16GB)
Storage 1TB
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0, 3xUsB 3.0, Audio / Mic Combo, HDMi, Ethernet
Dimensions 15.34 x 10.14 x 0.86/0.94 inches, 2.4kg

Stuff says ★★★★★
A no-nonsense, affordable gaming laptop that gets all the basics right while packing enough grunt to shame pricier rivals

WHERE SHOULD THE MONEY GO?

● **MSI Dominator**
The Dominator dominates with goodies like the Steelseries keyboard and the better 970M graphics card. But it also costs a considerable amount more than the resolution-totting Acer V15 Nitro Black Edition. And if these goodies can't be done away with, the MSI is tough to beat.

● **Acer Nitro V15**
The Acer Nitro says no to an over-the-top design and says yes to the essential bits. A gorgeous 4K display (once you play in 4K, it is difficult for Full HD to please you), enough memory and RAM, efficient cooling and the fairly equal GTX 960M graphics card. All at a very tempting price.

1 Thunder and lightning
With its Super RAID 3 with 4 SSD RAID 0 support, you get a theoretical read speed of 1600mbps. That is fast enough to copy an entire HD movie in seconds.

2 Magnet power
With the 'Shift' feature, you can either chose to have the laptop with its claws retracted when you work on your office presentation, and later draw blood in full power mode as you game online. SHIFT can be activated by the FN + F7 hotkey combo, or via the Dragon Gaming Center.

1 Ultra-sonic massacre
We've shouted enough good about the display, but the audio is even better. With four speakers and Dolby Digital Plus management, the Nitro shuts up the MSI by simply drowning it in the sonic ruckus it creates.

2 Pro performance
Even with the lower 960M graphics chip, the Nitro manages to handle games at 4K resolutions without breaking much sweat. *Metro* and *Arma 3* saw 35–50FPS.

Stuff India
CONTEST MANIA

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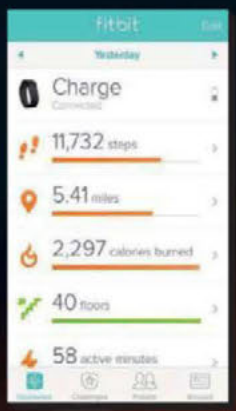
HOW IT WORKS?



PRETTY LIGHT ON ITS FEET
Clean design meets social features, goals and a food database to make for a fun experience.

ATTACK THE APP

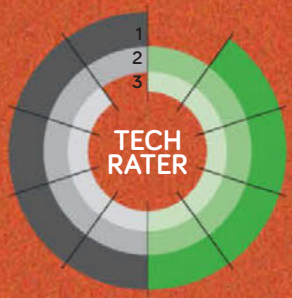
BIG, BOLD BUT NOT THAT BEAUTIFUL
You would want a more aesthetic approach than these colourful charts. Still, it gets the job done.

Getting jiggy with it? Try these for size!

Fitbit Charge	VS	Timex Ironman Move X20
The simple, yet modern looks mean you can wear it to a coffee shop without looking like a marathoner with a cheesecake addiction. Bonus points for the bright OLED display and the strap that's comfy enough to be forgotten.	1. DESIGN	Part rubber, part hard plastic, this is as comfortable to wear as a stapler around your wrist. The pre-drilled holes on the rubber band mean you may never find the perfectly snug fit either. It will, however, remain secure even underwater.
It'll track your steps, stairs climbed, and how much you sleep. The app lacks a full-fledged training mode but does include 3rd party integration, weight-loss goals, a water consumption tracker and a food database with some popular Indian dishes.	2. FEATURES	Giving the heart-rate monitor a skip but focusing on accuracy of other data collection like steps, sleep cycle, calorie burn, work-out time and distance covered, the Timex is a mixed bag. Wearing this to bed won't be conducive to good sleep though!
You might be able to get away with a 10-day gap between charges, but too many alarms and notifications will really cut that down. Even then, expect 7-8 days at the least and don't lose the proprietary (and too short) charging cable.	3. BATTERY	A massive 16-day stretch on a full charge had us hooked on to this band. The bright OLED display is punchy even under harsh sunlight, but the charging strap is a chore to get around the band. Timex has to come up with a more elegant solution.

Screen Type OLED, scrolling
Water resistant Yes (1ATM / splash proof)
Battery Rechargeable Li-polymer
Battery life 7-10 days
App compatibility Mac, Win, iOS, Android, Win Phone
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0

● **Price** ₹9990 / fitbit.com/in



Screen Type OLED, 30 characters, 1 line scrolling
Water resistant Yes (IPX7)
Battery Rechargeable Li-ion
Battery life 10-20 days
App compatibility iOS and Android
Connectivity Bluetooth

● **Price** ₹8995 / timexindia.com

★★★★★ STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

The Fitbit Charge isn't just a pretty face, it performs better than the Timex and shows more promise!

MUDSLINGERS

Mucking about in the mud isn't just for Mahindras. These stylish Europeans like to get their feet dirty too. The eternally stylish Brit takes on the suave and cool Swede in this test of tech...

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

₹58,63,370 (ex-showroom, Mumbai)

British icons don't always need to be stiff like Charles. Take the latest baby Rangie, for instance. After strutting its stuff on the world's greatest ramp walks, it has also scaled some of the toughest skateboard ramps, all without knotting up its knickers. Updated for 2015, it now comes with another 'world's first' moniker. That of holding a 9-speed transmission in its bowels. Obviously, we were keen on trying out the new cogs.

Backed by the best heritage

To be able to wear the Range Rover badge is no mean feat. Even as a fashionista, the Evoque manages to wade through thigh-high water and cross a mountain pass unscathed. There's turbo lag and the 9-speed tranny doesn't help with its jerky shifts, but once past 2000rpm, it rips through the toughest bits. The Drive Select knob also allows you to optimize the powertrain for different surfaces. Now that's progress, even in snow.

High on tech

If the Evoque looks futuristic from the outside, the interiors should match, right? Well, for 2015 there have been changes to that effect. 5-colour options for the ambient lighting, upgraded Meridian audio system, rear-seat entertainment package with WhiteFire digital cans and 8in screens, and much more. Roll down that lobby in style and roll up your sleeves for the weekend slush fest. This baby RR can do both with equal aplomb.

TECH SPECS

Engine 4cyl turbo-diesel
Power 190bhp
Torque 420Nm
Drivetrain 4WD, 9-speed
Tyres 235/60 R18
Top speed 195kmph

TECH CHEC

Audio 380W, 11-speaker	**Cameras** 5 cam surround
Sat-Nav Yes	**Safety** Parking aids
Connectivity Bluetooth, USB	**Sunroof** Panoramic

[**Words:** Nishant Padhiar **Illustrations:** Kritika Dayal]

INTERACTIVE SECTION
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VOLVO XC60

₹56,30,000 (ex-showroom, Mumbai)

Being a Swede, the big Volvo knows a thing or two about driving in harsh conditions. And also about luxury. Put them in a blender and you get the XC60 in its Inscription trim with the R-design package. Replete with oddities like water-repellant side windows, floating centre console, a human figure for AC controls and laser-assisted braking, this Volvo is anything but your grandma's club ride.

Power on
The 215bhp output from the 5cyl diesel engine is torquey enough to keep you pinned to the gorgeous seats. There's a hint of turbo-lag, but once it gathers momentum, it's a steam train on 18in wheels. The all-wheel-drivetrain lets you glide through slush and mid-sized obstructions while keeping it fun around the bends too. Urban topography is traversed with minimal fuss, mostly. The low-profile tyres make their style quotient felt, but smaller potholes and undulations are dismissed like a spider on the shoulder. Quirks like the reverse cam not activating automatically upon selecting reverse gear remain, but that doesn't deter us.

Scandinavian switch flick
Not as intuitive as a BMW or an Audi, but just as easy to master, Volvo's control system gets the job done. If you're into electronic music, the Harman Kardon audio will play the ideal DJ. It isn't your everyday brand snob, nor is it cheap, but it is almost worth it.

TECH SPECS

Engine 5cyl turbo-diesel
Power 215bhp
Torque 440Nm
Drivetrain 4WD, 8-speed
Tyres 235/60 R18
Top speed 205kmph

TECH CHEC

Audio
650W, 12-speaker

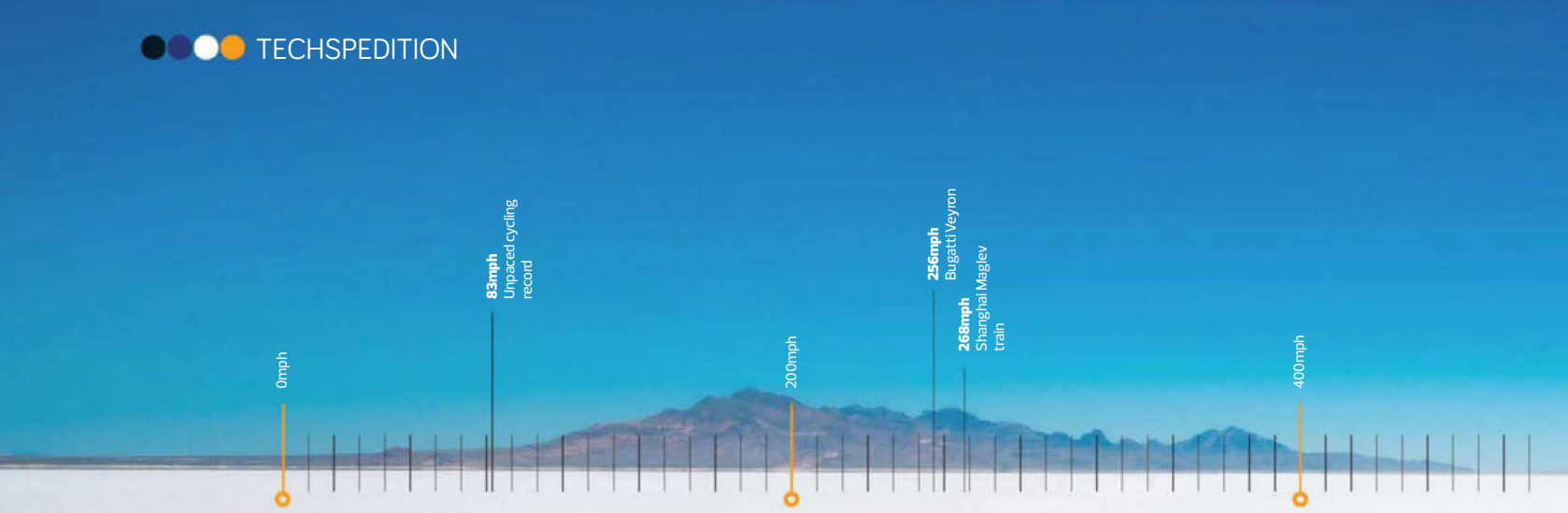
Sat-Nav
Yes

Connectivity
Bluetooth, USB

Cameras
Rear, reversing

Safety
Curtain airbags

Sunroof
Panoramic



THE 1000MPH KIT CAR

This September you'll be able to watch live on-board footage of a British rocket car attempting to break the land speed record. We visited the Bloodhound's shed to find out how the 1000mph machine is coming along

IN NUMBERS

Power 135,000hp
Total cost £35-40million (₹40 crore)
Cost to put your name on the fin £15
0-1000mph 55 seconds

IN BITS

A Composite body panels
B Solid aluminium wheels
C Eurofighter Typhoon engine
D Nose cone
E Chassis/air intake

ritish people in sheds have accomplished some amazing feats over the years, particularly where cars are concerned. But the Bloodhound is a different leap entirely.

The shed on this occasion is a former electrical storeroom on an industrial estate next to ScrewFix just off the M5 near Bristol. Inside it's more Airfix, but on a mind-blowing scale. On our visit, we find the team very slowly and very carefully putting together the remainder of the 3500 bespoke parts on a car that they hope will accelerate past the sound barrier and break 1000mph.

Given that the current record is 763mph (just 2mph more than the sound barrier, or Mach 1), that is a mighty jump. "This is real 'Here be dragons' stuff," says chief engineer Mark Chapman.

That phrase goes back to when mapmakers stuck pictures of mythical monsters in uncharted areas. This is similarly uncharted. The same team who took the record with Thrust SSC back in 1997, Richard Noble and driver Andy Green, are back to build a car they hope will eventually add the 250mph needed to reach their 1050mph target. There was a time when land speed attempts were happy with just a handful of miles per hour over the previous record. Not these fellas.

PLANES, ROCKETS AND AUTOMOBILES

Chapman calls the 13.5m-long Bloodhound "part racecar, part jet fighter, part spacecraft". In the main, that's because it's got engines from all three. Like all record-breaking cars from 1963 onwards, the Bloodhound uses a jet engine. A Rolls-Royce EJ200 engine from a Eurofighter Typhoon, to be precise, on loan from the Ministry of Defence.

That's good for 600mph, but the rest of the speed will come from rockets: a single one this year to get the car to around 800mph, and then three next year for the 1000mph bid. There's also a roaring 550hp Jaguar V8 engine, but it's used purely to pump fuel into the rockets at 40 litres per second.

For something that will create such fury, particularly for Green sitting just below the jet air intake, it's all very peaceful in the shed. There's an occasional buzz from a lathe in the machine shop, but mostly the small team – made up primarily of motorsport, aviation or Army engineers – are carefully inspecting and fitting together very shiny, intricately cut pieces of solid aluminium.

Currently the car is a titanium-and-carbon-fibre-wrapped aluminium tubular chassis, which seems way too undercooked for a vehicle that makes its first ever test run in August (on a runway in Newquay, Cornwall, hitting around 260mph), before heading to the record attempt location on a dried-up lake-bed in South Africa a month later.

As is traditional with blokes in sheds, the team members give little away emotionally about the extraordinary engineering heights they are scaling, but the pressure must be building. After all, this is a car that will drive faster on the ground than former RAF pilot Green ever achieved in the air in more than 3000 hours of flying.

ROCKET MAN

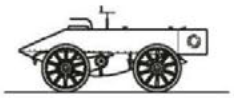
The truly scary thing is the rocket propulsion. Like the throttle of any car, the jet part is fairly easily controllable by using your right foot to vary the amount of aviation fuel going in; but as sci-fi granddaddy Isaac Asimov once memorably wrote of rocket fuel: *'There are... some chemicals that explode shatteringly, some that flame ravenously, some that corrode hellishly, some that poison sneakily, and some that stink stenchily. As far as I know, though, only liquid rocket fuels have all these delightful properties combined into one delectable whole.'*

But the Bloodhound engineers reckon they've made a breakthrough. High-test peroxide (HTP), a high-concentration version of the traditional hair dye, isn't new for propelling rockets and is popular for missiles and torpedoes. It's also massively dangerous – you might remember chemistry experiments where the teacher tipped a small amount onto

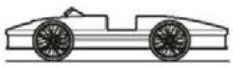
A 550-HORSEPOWER JAGUAR V8 ENGINE IS NEEDED JUST TO DRIVE THE FUEL PUMP

BEFORE BLOODHOUND

Year 1898
Car Jentaud
The first record-holder was splendidly named Frenchman Count Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat. He timed his stately electric car over a kilometre and said: "I'm the fastest." Never mind that his 39mph average was below that of the period pedal-bike record.

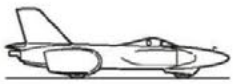


Year 1906
Car Stanley Rocket
The first and only steam-powered car to hold the record. This American machine was also the first to crack 200kmh (128mph). Amazingly, it held the steam record until 2009, when it was beaten by a British team who reached 140mph.

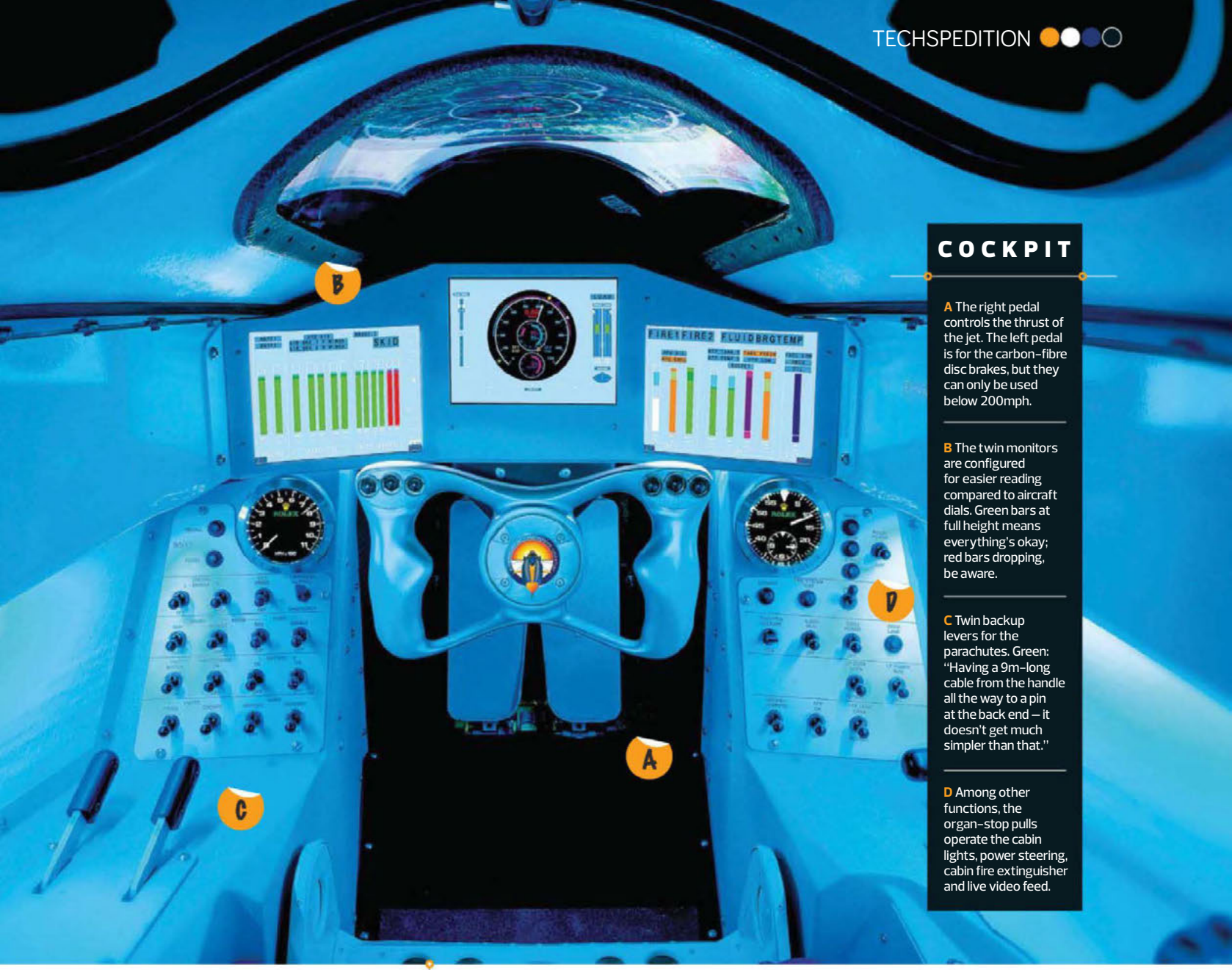


Year 1935
Car Bluebird
Britain's Malcolm Campbell had been breaking records in Bluebird since 1931, but it wasn't until 1935 when he went to the Bonneville salt flats in Utah that he broke 300mph in a much improved car powered by a 37-litre V12 Rolls-Royce engine.

Year 1963
Car Spirit of America
This was the first record-breaking car to be propelled by a jet engine... but despite hitting a very respectable 407mph, American Craig Breedlove's three-wheel car was deemed a tricycle and so doesn't feature in the car records.



Year 1997
Car Thrust SSC
Andy Green's first jet-powered four-wheeler became the first car to break the speed of sound (761mph), hitting 763mph (Mach 1.020) in the Nevada desert. Powered by two Rolls-Royce jet engines, it was steered from the rear wheels.



COCKPIT

A The right pedal controls the thrust of the jet. The left pedal is for the carbon-fibre disc brakes, but they can only be used below 200mph.

B The twin monitors are configured for easier reading compared to aircraft dials. Green bars at full height means everything's okay; red bars dropping, be aware.

C Twin backup levers for the parachutes. Green: "Having a 9m-long cable from the handle all the way to a pin at the back end – it doesn't get much simpler than that."

D Among other functions, the organ-stop pulls operate the cabin lights, power steering, cabin fire extinguisher and live video feed.

organic matter and it 'flamed ravenously', in Asimov's phrase. But in the Bloodhound, it's pumped to where it can react in this combustible manner with another fuel that's basically a rubbery polyurethane, a version of the material used to make skateboard wheels.

The subsequent burning at 3000°C, hotter than a volcano, consumes 800 litres of HTP in the 17 seconds it'll take to push the speed up to 1000mph. But – and this is the crucial bit – you can turn it off. Regular rockets and torpedoes are essentially fireworks: just light and stand back. But if Green feels like something's gone wrong, he can switch off the V8 fuel pump and instantly the rockets sputter out.

And how are the force of the jet and the rocket combined going to react together? "We're not sure," says Green. "It's never been done before."

HOPING IT PANS OUT

Hakskeen Pan, a dry lake bed near South Africa's Namibian border, gives 12 miles of firm flatness for the run itself. The only problem was the millions of surface stones that the wheels could flick up onto the bodywork with the force of bomb shrapnel. With typical disregard for the impossible, **the Bloodhound team paid 300 locals to remove the stones – all 16,000 tonnes of them – by hand. That's like hand-sweeping a highway running from Wales to Moscow.**

This desolate desert region will be turned into a small city come September, and camping there (for four to six months in total, this year and next) will consume around half of the £35-40million the project has cost, thanks to the total lack of amenities. By the time the Bloodhound gang arrives, it'll be better connected than many UK towns, with a 4G network and fibre-optic cable laid for fast uploading.

The reason this is so important is that the Bloodhound has been pitched to private and government sponsors as a rolling educational project – a 7.5-tonne, 135,000hp chunk of brain-candy designed to get British kids thinking about engineering as being cool again. And the coolest way to do that is to deliver exactly the same data from the car's 500 sensors as the engineers are seeing onto your phone or tablet. "You'll get to mark our homework live as we do it," says Green. Well, not quite live. The feed from the cameras will have a short delay in case Green swears in the cockpit. Or, as he doesn't say, in case something terrible happens.

IT'S NOT A PLANE, BOND

Some of these sensors will help monitor the ride-height. "We've got 100mm of suspension travel – that's not a lot before you become a plane or a plough," says Chapman. Quite apart from the fact that an airborne Bloodhound robs Green of all control, the run could be judged non-compliant by the FIA, the motorsport body that ensures the two timed runs within the hour follow the rules.

Green will be holding a steering wheel that connects to the front two of the four pressed aluminium wheels and, although it'll give him some control over the car, that's certainly not the kind of grip that Formula 1 drivers or even owners of fairly ordinary sports cars are used to. The cornering limit for the car is about 0.4g – considerably less than the 1g limit of ▶

FIVE REASONS WHY WE LOVE THE BLOODHOUND

A It has aluminium wheels
The four 39in wheels will be spinning 170 times a second, or 10,200rpm, and that calls for some seriously stress-resistant metal. They were forged using an aluminium alloy – one that didn't exist four years ago – to ensure the internal grain structure is as hardy as possible. Then the Bloodhound team fired shots at them to replicate debris hitting them at 1000mph. They're not driven – the rocket and jet provide the thrust. In fact it's been a long time since a land speed record car has used driven wheels: all the way back to Donald Campbell in 1964 with the final Bluebird.

B It has the toughest tail-fin in history
The 8ft-high fin has a delicate job to do. Too big and it'll dictate where the car will go, too small and the car's instability will make it too twitchy to accurately steer. The job of lead fin engineer Terry Godsmark, formerly of the RAF and then Airbus, is to ensure the strength of the most stressed part of the car. "The hardest-working fin in history," Green calls it. Six aluminium 'spars' are the backbone of the skeleton, and the largest was milled from a three-tonne solid aluminium lump that got whittled down to something that weighs just 25kg.

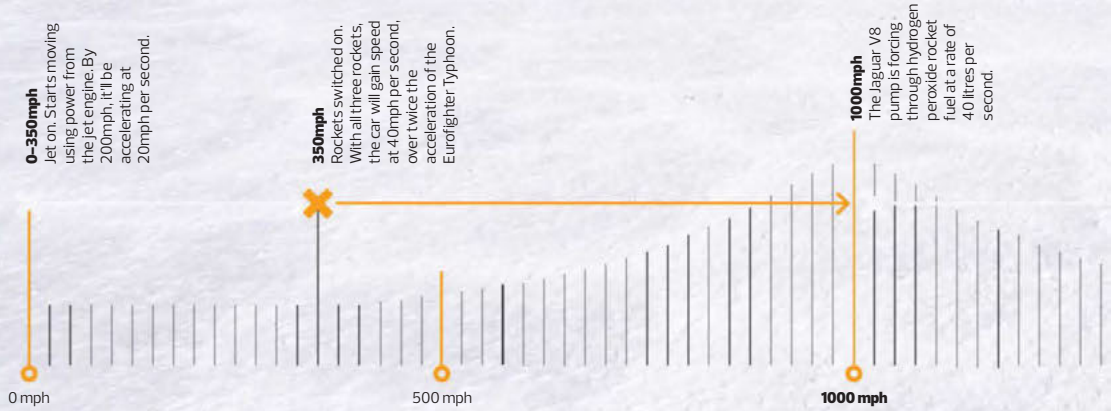
C It will pioneer a new 'hybrid' rocket
The car's rockets come from Norwegian firm Nammo. The high-test peroxide fuelling system, which burns rubbery solid fuel, is something new that Nammo hopes can bring down the cost of satellite launching by allowing rockets to be easily reused. And while it hasn't been designed as a green machine, chief engineer Chapman argues that hydrogen peroxide does have some green credentials in that it breaks down to oxygen and water. Noble describes the carbon footprint of the Bloodhound after the 60 planned runs in its life as equal to "4.5 lactating cows".

D It produces 12 tonnes of thrust
A supercharged V8 in your Jaguar F-Type or Range Rover should easily top-trump your neighbours on power. But here all 550hp is used to push HTP fuel to the rockets by spinning a 25kg fuel pump at around 10,000rpm. This was originally a Cosworth F1 engine, but the team found the torquier and less finicky Jag unit did a better job. Green will start the engine with a button that releases the clutch and starts to pump the fuel. As soon as that hits the solid fuel the reaction occurs – boom! – and 12 tonnes of thrust will be added to the nine tonnes given by the jet.

E Its speedometer goes past Mach 1
Sponsor Rolex created some extra-special back-up dials for the Bloodhound, including a chronograph and a speedo in case the cabin computers fail for any reason. Just for us, the tin-can-sized speedo was carefully removed from the foam bed in its lockable aluminium carry case so we could see covetable details such as the 'MPH x 1000' inscription at the bottom and the Mach 1 line between 700mph and 800mph. The actual timing lights are pulsed lasers out on the course, placed 10x further apart than normal so Green doesn't hit them.

FLOOR IT!

How to do 0-1000mph (and back) in two minutes

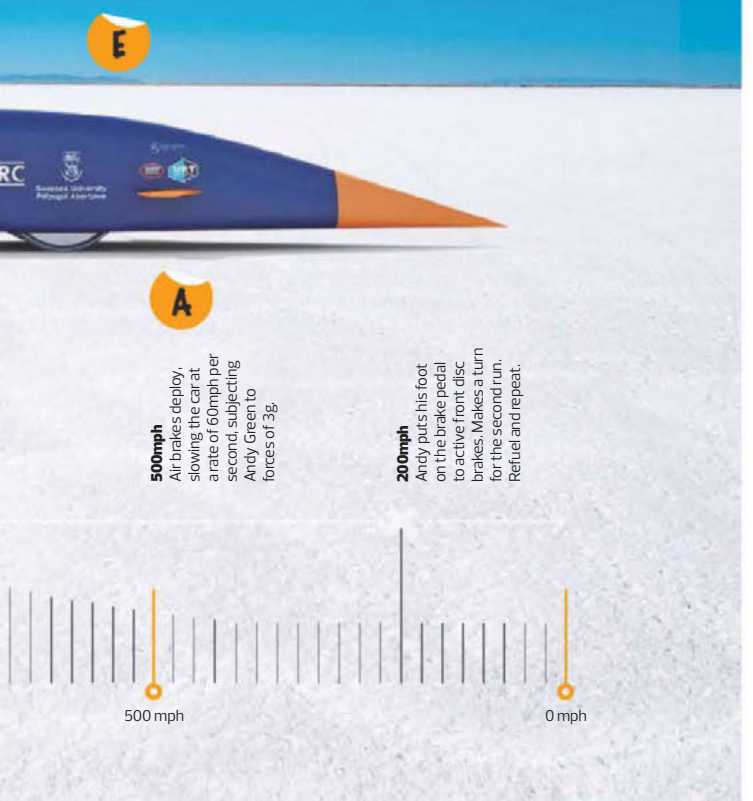


GREEN WILL DEPLOY THE MASSIVE AIRBRAKES AND SCRUB OFF SPEED AT 60MPH PER SECOND

most cars, but enough that if Green has to correct hard to get the Bloodhound back on track, it won't roll over.

This is partly because there's no spoiler, and no downforce to keep the car pressed into the desert – at least that's the hope of the designers, using their computational fluid dynamics (CFD) computer programmes to guess the flow of air. **The drag comes when Green deploys the great airbrake flaps and scrubs off speed at a tremendous rate of 60mph per second.**

The idea is that Green's reflexes and coolness, as first the jet and then the rocket fuel burn ferociously behind him, will make him an engineering pin-up, whether he hits Mach 1.4 or not. "If it peaks at 990mph, that's still a massive win. If we engage kids in their tens of millions then we've already achieved our goals, regardless of what speeds we do," he says. "Getting to 1000mph will just be a nice way to finish that off."



HOW TO DRIVE AT 1000MPH

by Andy Green (Bloodhound pilot)

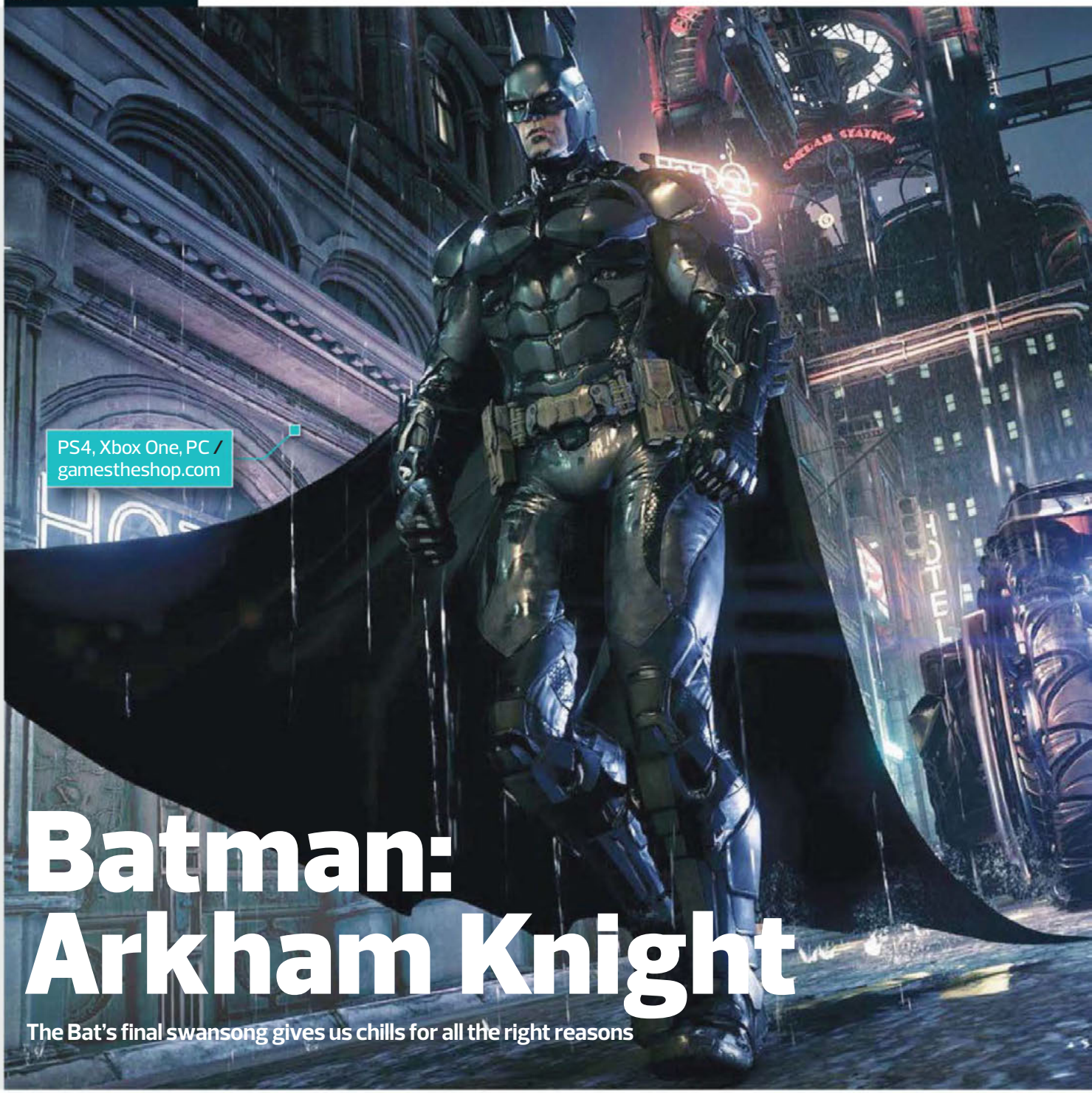
I'll feel like I'm driving straight up in the air.
Accelerating at 40mph per second, I will be experiencing the g-load of blood running from my feet to my head; my heart rate will try to go down to reduce blood pressure. Due to a disorientating effect called the somatogravic illusion, it'll feel to my inner ear like I'm lying on my back. In other words I'll feel like I'm driving straight up. Pilots get it all the time. This is a more extreme version.

Then I'll feel like I'm going straight down.
With the airbrakes on I'll be reducing speed at 60mph per second and now all the blood suddenly wants to run from my head to my feet. That's when tensing up legs and stomach stops me from blacking out. It's known as the push-pull effect and acrobatic pilots train hard against it because it will catch you out. I'll also feel as though I'm going straight down, and that is very disorientating. You can't train to make it go away – it's something you need to work through.

The cockpit will feel like the noisiest place on the planet.
The good news is that, at 600-700mph, I now can't hear the world's noisiest jet engine because I'm leaving the sound behind me. The bad news is that, because the air going through the intake must be below 600mph, we've got to reduce the speed by 400mph using a series of shockwaves. That's incredibly noisy. We're probably more worried about this than the g-forces. It's not just my safety – the instruments will collapse with too much vibration and acoustic energy. We're using an awful lot of soundproofing to keep the noise down.

My racetrack training was as relevant as flying jets.
You might wonder what racing at 50-100mph has got to do with driving at 500-1000mph. Well, the Radical SR3 RS [*which Andy drove at Goodwood*] is a lively sports car and a great way to feel the grip you have. Is the front gripping? Is the back biting? How do you balance the two? I'll be doing the same thing at 300-400mph when the car is sliding around. I also drove a Jaguar on snow and got a lot more out of that than I expected. Snow has about the same level of grip as driving on the desert.

Thrust SSC handled really badly.
Just shy of 300mph, I had 90° of steering lock on. We almost aborted it. Part of the reason the car handled so badly was that we were running it nose-heavy for safety reasons. The other part was that we didn't understand its aerodynamic balance as a car. We couldn't know 15-20 years ago – it was 10 years afterwards that someone came up with a computer model that said: this is why this happened. Also, rear-wheel steering is a silly idea. It's actually unstable. There's a reason it's limited to forklifts and shopping trolleys.



PS4, Xbox One, PC / gamestheshop.com

Batman: Arkham Knight

The Bat's final swansong gives us chills for all the right reasons

Arkham Knight, the final installment in Rocksteady's Bat Trilogy, more than makes up for any previous disappointment. Lessons from Arkham City have been learned and brought to bear in what we can only describe as a *tour de* force of game design. The bat is back, and he's riding on the back of a must-have contender for Game of the Year.

For starters, we found ourselves hopelessly in love with *Arkham Knight's* most significant addition: the stunning, desirable Batmobile. Whether you're hammering enemy fortifications or delving into one of The Riddler's puzzle dungeons, it's amazing how Rocksteady has managed to so fully integrate the experience of taking a car-tank-robodeath-thing with you like it was a pocket watch.

Discounting the Batmobile for a moment, the game still shines. The much-lauded combat system returns with its timed counters and tool selections. The basic system remains largely unchanged, but it's smoother than ever, with triple counters and a host of unusual takedowns on offer. *Arkham Knight* is an action game rather than an action-RPG and the former genre tends to suffer in terms of longevity. Well not in this case.

The truly impressive part is how consistently brilliant that content manages to be. Cut scenes and set pieces are assembled with an artistic grace that takes into account the greatest strengths of the gaming medium. Part of this is down to the clever decision to pit Bats against Scarecrow this time around.

We struggle to think of another action game that has mastered action, puzzling, platforming, adventure and racing quite so effectively, and presented each element with such an insane degree of polish. Every other contender in the field should gaze on in awe and take note – this is the new gold standard.

STUFF SAYS With its open-world setting and Batmobile, this is action-gaming perfection ★★★★★

There's a million cool ways to clear a room of goons here

Every character is written and executed to perfection

Breaking Bat

There are holes in the *Dark Knight's* armour but they are few and far between. The biggest is quest blocking. Although Bats can access all three islands from the start of the game, the Batmobile can't. Which would be fine if the available side-quests and missions took account of that, but they don't – meaning that you'll sometimes arrive at a seemingly active quest only to be told 'Oh dear, no Batmobile'.

It's a strange design decision for a game with an open world.The other main problem with the game concerns its performance on PC. It was clear within hours of its release that the PC version was totally broken. Single-digit framerates, crashes and a host of other bugs caused Warner Bros. to remove the PC version of *Arkham Knight* from sale, everywhere. It's still missing from the Steam Store and no-one knows when it will return.

In fairness to Rocksteady, the latest patch has solved most of the serious issues, and the developer has promised a suite of extra support and tweaks for PC gamers in the future. But even so, the affair remains an unsightly blemish on the game's record.

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Kerbal Space Program

This stellar sim will take you to the 'Mun' and back, or further still, turning you into a one-person NASA

Don't let the cute characters fool you: *Kerbal Space Program* is serious business. It's a space exploration sandbox game that allows you to do whatever you like within its framework – it provides the tools to build spaceworthy craft and a vast solar system to jet off into from your home planet, Kerbin.

The fact that your astronauts and scientists are bug-eyed, green-skinned creatures doesn't really change the fact that, at its heart, this is a pretty hardcore sim that will seem overwhelming at times. It's quite clear from early on that you are being left to fend for yourself. This is a game about experimenting, messing up, trying again and eventually making a breakthrough.

The game's simulation of physics and aerodynamics feels, to our (decidedly non-scientific) mind, pretty dead-on. You'll want to build stable craft (rockets at first, space planes later) to avoid accidents, and use caution with the controls. Rockets are powerful, volatile things, and have a habit of exploding. Building one with enough thrust to escape Kerbin's atmosphere and remain in a stable orbit? It's bloody hard work. Taking it a step further and putting one on the 'Mun' is a feat that makes you feel as smug as an actual rocket engineer must.

Space is a big place. One of *Kerbal Space Program*'s biggest achievements is that it gives you the impression of its sheer, scary scale. In terms of presentation, it's a little rough – very much the limited-budget indie title it is – but while it might have been nice to fly over a beautiful, detailed Kerbin rather than the near-featureless planet you get, it doesn't really feel like a huge loss. The real joy of this game is in its nuts and bolts, not its visuals or sound.

There have been space flight simulators before, but nothing that manages to feel simultaneously so fully-featured and (relatively) welcoming as this. Anyone with any interest in the extraterrestrial will love it. Now, if you'll excuse us, we have a super-awesome Mun lander to build...

Build a range of spaceships in two different challenge modes: Science or Career

There's a toggle that auto-stabilises your craft – very helpful at times

STUFF SAYS Space sims don't get any better than this rocket-building wonder ★★★★★

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These tech products take their inspiration from the natural world's finest work: designs perfected over millions of years of evolution

NAKAMICHI DRAGON LILY

Take a moment to admire the sleek form of the Nakamichi Dragon Lily. Its metallic petals envelop a 2.1 digital integrated amplifier and speaker with Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and NFC capabilities. Enjoy its ability to control and charge iThings via USB. Then take a moment to think about its namesake, the dragon lily flower (also known as the 'stink lily') which, upon flowering, produces a smell almost identical to rotting meat, attracting the swarms of flies that help to pollinate it. And be thankful that Nakamichi haven't taken the biomimicry too far.

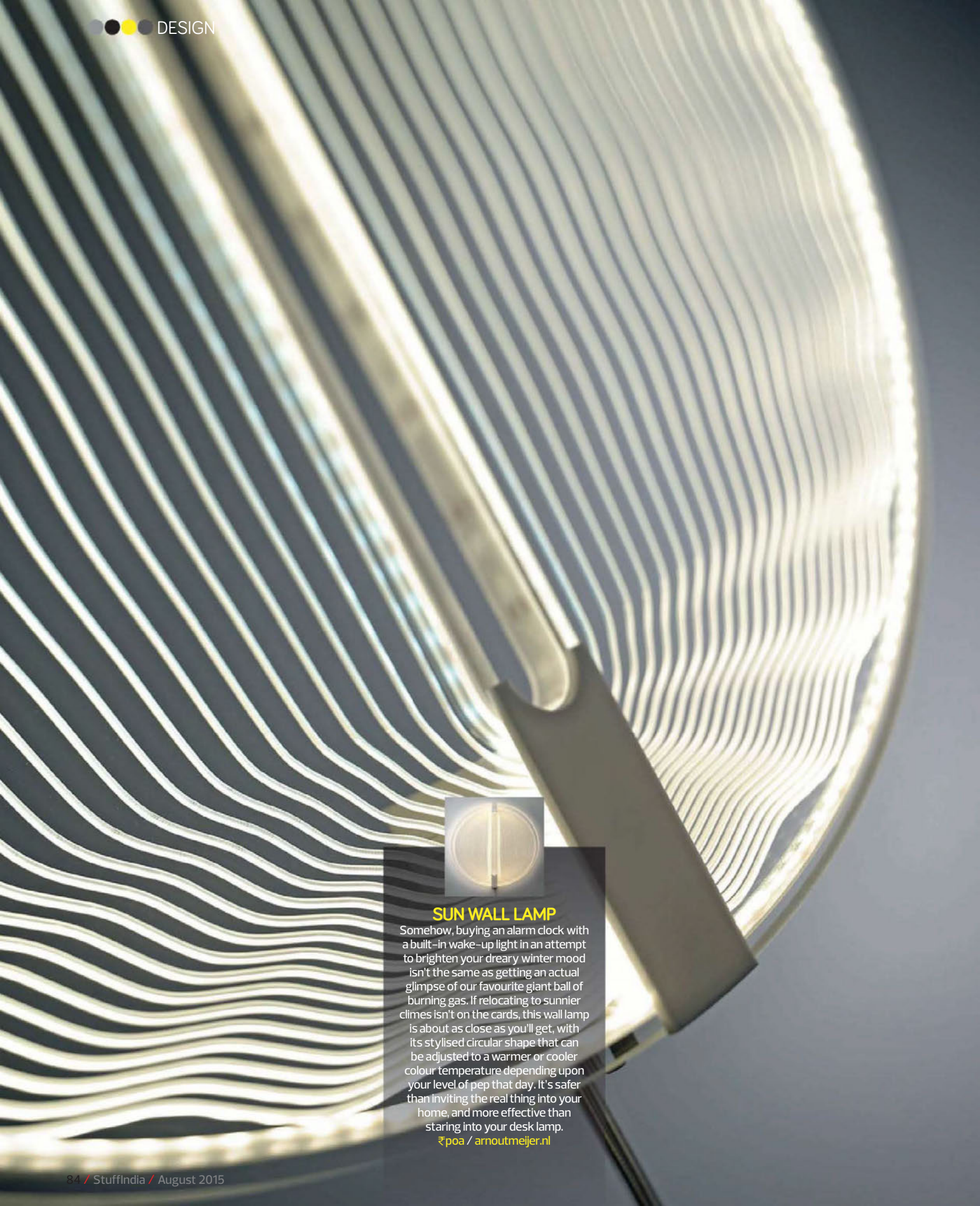
₹24,000* / nakamichi.com

AUDIOQUEST NIGHTHAWK

The NightHawks may be named after a bird of prey, but their design draws inspiration from a much smaller flying animal. The 3D-printed grilles on these semi-open headphones take their cue from the structure responsible for iridescence in butterflies' wings. Produced by selective laser sintering (SLS), AudioQuest claims the intricate structure diffuses sound and thwarts distortion for a superior listening experience. Add earcups made of 'liquid wood' and cables built on AudioQuest's 30 years of experience and you've got something worth listening to.
₹48,900 / audioquest.com

B&W T7

In nature, the honeycomb's job is to hold together nature's sweet bounty, collected by thousands of tireless worker bees all summer. In a Bluetooth speaker, that same honeycomb shape is at the heart of the micro matrix structure that braces the T7's cabinet to reduce unwanted vibrations. It'll make short work of hi-res audio with its aptX Bluetooth connection and DAC, and keep the party going all night with 18 hours' playback from its rechargeable lithium-ion battery and twin auxiliary bass radiators that promise enough boom to shake your room.
₹29,900 / neoteric.co.in



SUN WALL LAMP

Somehow, buying an alarm clock with a built-in wake-up light in an attempt to brighten your dreary winter mood isn't the same as getting an actual glimpse of our favourite giant ball of burning gas. If relocating to sunnier climes isn't on the cards, this wall lamp is about as close as you'll get, with its stylised circular shape that can be adjusted to a warmer or cooler colour temperature depending upon your level of pep that day. It's safer than inviting the real thing into your home, and more effective than staring into your desk lamp.
₹poa / arnoutmeijer.nl

SOLID GRAY BACKPACK

Often the job of a designer isn't to invent an entirely new thing, but instead to combine techniques and materials that improve the function of a product. That's why, when Solid Gray's designers were looking for a way to make a lightweight but strong backpack, they took their inspiration from nature, stealing ideas from shrimps and the armadillo's segmented armour. They then added a retracting handle, clever compartments for sunglasses and other nick-nacks, plus room for a 15in laptop and interchangeable straps within its 15-litre volume.

from ₹11,641 / solid-gray.com

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10:30 PM STRIP MOVIES

CLOUD

OK, so we're straying away from biology and towards geography here, but it's still Mother Nature's realm and we like the idea of having a cloud indoors. This one is made from felted hypoallergenic fiberfill for that authentic fluffy look, while on the inside is a Bluetooth speaker and light show controlled by an Arduino board. Unlike a real cloud, which rarely obeys commands, this one can be instructed via remote control, switching between lighting modes or responding angrily to its surroundings with a thunderstorm triggered by nearby movement.
US$3360 / richardclarkson.com

BIOMIMETIC BUILDINGS AROUND THE WORLD

Eden Project
The hexagonal domes of this giant greenhouse require no internal supports and draw on the strength of tessellated triangles, a strategy found in the human spine.

The Gherkin
London's iconic tower circulates cooling air the same way a glass sponge circulates seawater, helping it to use around half the amount of energy of a conventional tower.

Lotus Temple
One of the Bahá'í Houses of Worship, open to worshippers from all faiths, this temple in Delhi has a nine-sided circular structure and clearly takes its aesthetic from a lotus flower.

Eastgate
This shopping centre in Zimbabwe uses internal structures inspired by towering termite mounds to aid cooling and ventilation, leading to a reduction in energy usage.

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Media hoard

Arnie plays a human, Tame Impala plays it straight and Hitler plays to a 21st-century crowd in *Stuff*'s round-up of the best new watching, listening and reading matter

WATCH

Maggie _cinema

Terminator isn't the only dead-on-its-feet franchise that you'll find Arnold Schwarzenegger in this month – but brooding zombie horror drama *Maggie* takes that description literally.

Arnie plays Wade, a man whose daughter has been bitten but allowed home on the condition that she's quarantined for painful, drug-induced euthanasia before she starts to turn. This means the Governator must deal with his most challenging enemy yet: emotions.

The progress of the infection that turns Maggie (the excellent Abigail Breslin) into a flesh-hungry zombie is glacial compared to the instantaneous transformations seen in *28 Days Later* and the like, which gives first-time director Henry Hobson plenty of time to squeeze out all of Arnold's big, manly tears. We meet other infected neighbours, including a boy Maggie's age, and for a while the film becomes a surprisingly touching undead teen drama.

Certainly it's far from textbook Arnie – this isn't a film about fighting for survival, it's about fighting with the choices faced when a miserable death becomes inevitable for a loved one; and while the ending is something of a missed opportunity to push Schwarzenegger even further, the performances of both leads are anything but lifeless.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

It Follows _cinema, DVD, VOD

It might adhere to one of the main horror movie rules outlined in *Scream* – having sex more often than not ends in your grisly demise – but *It Follows* is anything but formulaic. Its curse stalks victims slowly but incessantly, creating an almost constant sense of helpless dread that doesn't let up until the very end.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

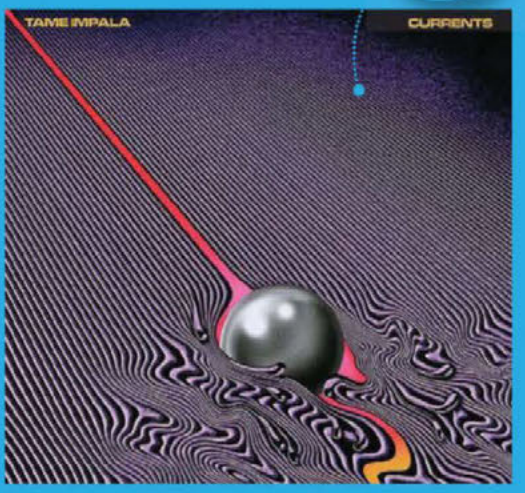
Jupiter Ascending _Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

The dialogue has all the finesse of one of those 'inspirational' Facebook posts, the plot is straight from a GCSE creative writing class and the characters are weaker than the weird voice Eddie Redmayne puts on. The one consolation is that *Jupiter Ascending* often looks stunning: a digitally polished turd.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★☆☆☆

LISTEN



Currents _Tame Impala

After two albums of murky psychedelia, Aussie one-man band Kevin Parker has decided to throw his guitars on the barbie and become an '80s electro soul-pop artist. We don't know why he has done this. But while it would be easy to accuse the little fella of shooting through like a piker, the resulting record is not half as bad as it ought to be.

Single *'Cause I'm A Man* is a pretty solid indicator of where these *Currents* are leading: it still sounds like a Tame Impala record but the phasey swirls have cleared, replaced by fat retro synths.

Weirdly, those other Antipodean psych-rock freaks, Unknown Mortal Orchestra, also seem to have gone awfully pop this year. Is there some sort of dope famine down there?
Richard Purvis

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

Gods and Generals _Civil War

Covering ground from the US civil war up to the Second World War, *Gods and Generals* is as bombastic in the way you'd expect from a band formed by ex-Sabaton members. Sadly though, it comes off as slightly formulaic, and is also a bit lacking in that aura of glory and triumph a power metal album needs.
Vaibhav Sharma

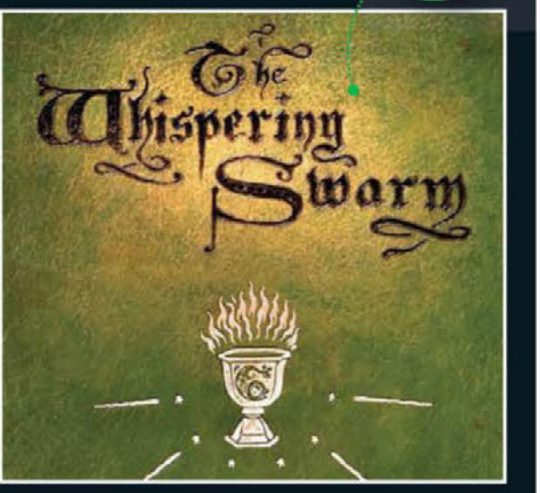
STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

Before this World _James Taylor

In his first original release since 2002, Taylor sticks close to what he does best – Americana laced nostalgia. It might not break any new ground, but the familiarity is almost comforting. Folksy, yet with a satisfying bite, *Before this World* is also Taylor's first album to reach No. 1 on the US Billboard charts. Well-deserved, indeed.
Vaibhav Sharma

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

READ

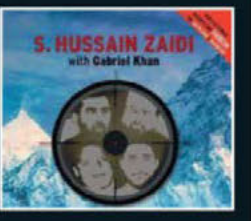


The Whispering Swarm _Michael Moorcock

At once an autobiography and a work of historical romantic fantasy, this book is divisive. Moorcock certainly has stories to tell of his time growing up as a writer in London, rubbing shoulders with now-famous sci-fi authors and generally kicking around the place in a '60s kind of way.

The forays into fantasy – his introduction to and swashbuckling adventures in a strange 'other London' called Alsacia – are more exciting, but told with the same straight-faced tone: "And then I had a sword fight. And then I got the girl." I found it a confusing mix, but if you're a proper Moorcock fan then you'll probably love it.
Fraser Macdonald

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆



Mumbai Avengers _S Hussain Zaidi

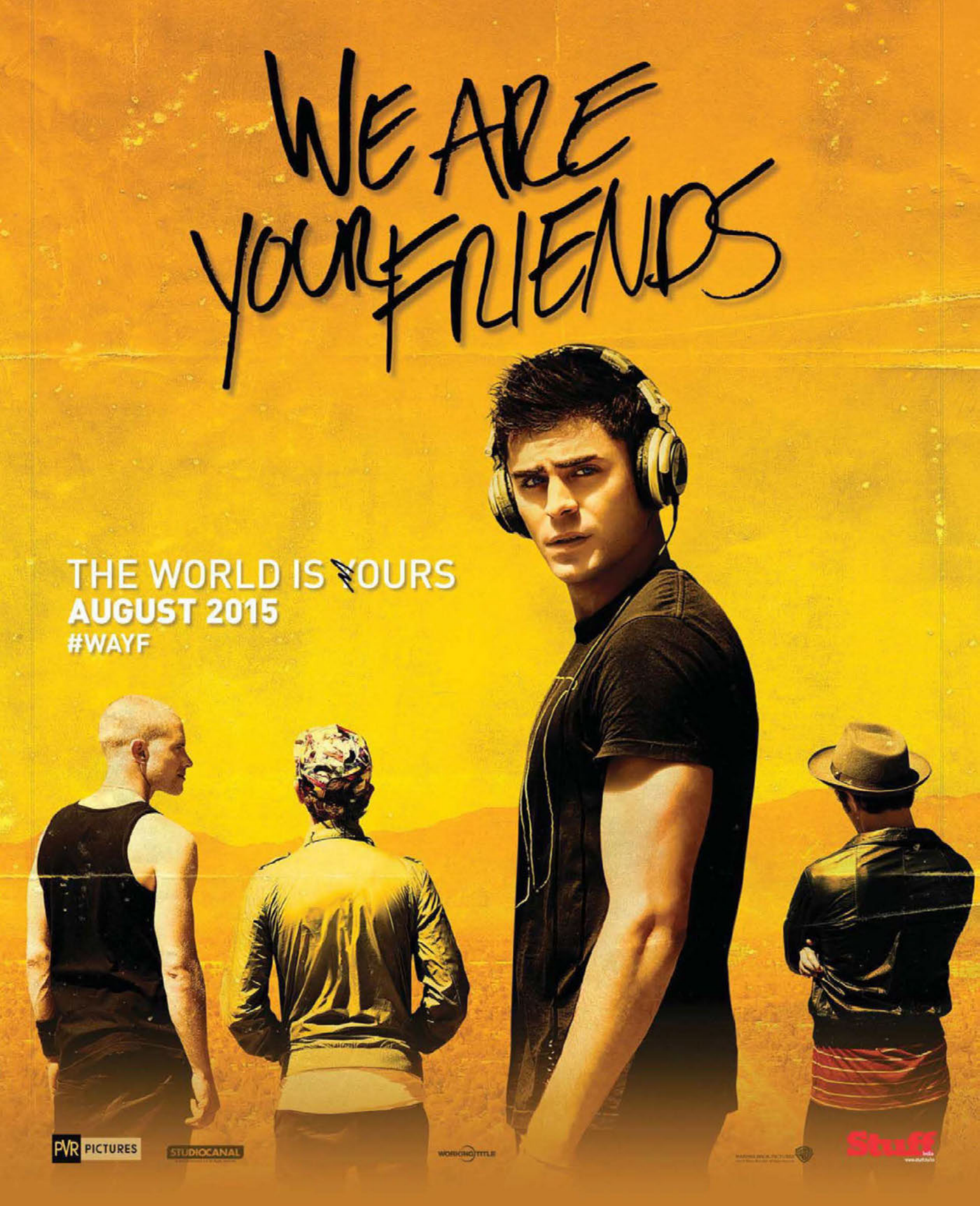
There's nary a dull moment as a bunch of Indian spooks criss-cross the world, sending the perpetrators of the 26/11 terror attacks to meet their makers. An enjoyable read, despite the sloppy plotting, the use of tech as a Deus ex machina and the way finer details get passed over in favour of an easy way out.
Vaibhav Sharma

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

Killer in the Shadows _Amit Nangia

Inspector Abhay Pandey might be a 'Dabang Daroga' but he believes in doing things in style. And he's certainly not going to let anything – dead bodies included – dampen his spirits or deter him from protecting the beautiful lawyer Naina. Cheerfully channelling the spirit of old pulp novels, this is a fun 'timepass' read.
Vaibhav Sharma

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆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p94
PLAYLIST: COMEDY
All the gear you need to go on a hysterical laughing marathon

p96
BETA YOURSELF ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY
Get the blur out of the picture and shout action

p99
5 WAYS TO...
Turn your regular Android smartwatch into something Mr. Bond would be proud of

PLAYLIST COMEDY

You probably think the only funny things on the internet are frowning cats. And while they are very funny, you can stream a whole river of laughs right to your telly

Sightseers
After the dark-as-a-disco-in-a-black-hole *Kill List*, the last thing we expected of Ben Wheatley was a caravans 'n' cadavers caper – but that's exactly what this is. Chris and Tina are on a murderous trail across the Lake District and beyond, like Bonnie and Clyde, but from Dudley rather than Dallas.

Monty Python's The Meaning Of Life
It may not be as coherent as *Life Of Brian*, but from the musical classic *Every Sperm Is Sacred* to John Cleese's sex education class, this is easily the Pythons' smuttiest film. Yet it's also laced with sophisticated gags on philosophy and world finance.

Father Ted
There never will be a funnier comedy character than Father Dougal McGuire – just one glimpse of his face as he puzzles over some trivial matter is enough to set us off. *Father Ted* also boasts the hilariously hideous Father Jack and Mrs Doyle, and every single episode bears repeat viewing.

Alan Partridge's Mid Morning Matters
Following *I'm Alan Partridge* was never going to be easy, so Team Alan made a dozen one-location shorts instead – and they work brilliantly. There's no plot, just lots and lots of Alan doing what he does worst: filling the airwaves with absolute rubbish.

Brooklyn Nine-Nine
If you're not already an Andy Samberg fan (shame on you), *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* will make you one. The super-childish detective he plays is always at the centre of things in this comedy cop show, and it's all as silly and immature as television gets... which is fine by us.

The Alternative Comedy Experience
To many, stand-up on TV means repeats of *Live At The Apollo* – and that's exactly why this show is so important. Filmed in a genuine comedy club in front of a regular audience – no *Strictly* stars here – The *Experience* is curated by Captain Grumbles himself, Stewart Lee.

It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
Narcissistic. Sexist. Sociopathic. Elitist. Delusional. All these descriptions fit every single member of staff at Paddy's Bar in Philadelphia. From kidnapping cats to poisoning rivals, and getting drunk at every opportunity, you're unlikely to find a group of people you hate to love more.

Nathan Barley
Charlie Brooker and Chris Morris's worryingly prescient 2005 sitcom tells the story of an East London-dwelling 'self-facilitating media node'. It's only now, 10 years later, that most people have begun to appreciate just how brilliant (and accurate) this hipster satire is. Keep it chopped out, yeah?

Team America: World Police
On paper, this potty-mouthed musical from the makers of *South Park* had far more reason to cause an international incident than *The Interview*. It portrayed North Korea's then-leader Kim Jong Il as a megalomaniacal cockroach, singing *I'm So Ronery*...

Parks And Recreation
This must-see show has *Modern Family*'s warmth, *Arrested Development*'s absurdity and the mockumentary style of *The Office* and centres on the inconsequential workdays of the least consequential council department of the made-up town of Pawnee, Indiana.

Transparent
While Amazon's been trying to 'do a Netflix' by creating its own blockbusting TV for ages, neither provide their services in India. Amazon's *Transparent* is really bold – the story of a divorcee announcing to his kids that he's going to live as a woman. Sounds heavy, but it's also got a degree of wit and sharpness that's still a TV rarity.

NON-TV LOLS

Did all that ROFLing make you accidently roll headlong into your TV? Oops.

EASTINDIACOMEDY.COM

Eastindiacomedy.com is a good place to pick up news and new videos from some of the best comedians in the country, and there's also a store to shop for clothes. How wonderful.

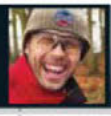
TWITTER

Comedians frequently use Twitter to test out material and gauge reactions. For starters, try @jamesAcaster, @adamhess1, @robdelaney and @timkeyperson.

COMEDY BANG BANG: THE PODCAST

Scott Aukerman's weekly podcast still attracts some of the world's best comedians to play (usually insane) improvised characters.

BETA YOUR-SELF



ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

Tired of taking blurry sports photos? Legendary biking photographer Seb Rogers reveals how to pan, flash and freeze-frame your way to action-snapping glory

THE BASICS

■ Speed is king.
Action photography means capturing a moving object – so selecting the right shutter speed, the length of time the shutter is open, is key. Use Shutter Priority mode to control this.

■ Swing like a golfer.
If the subject is moving, you – and the camera – should be moving too. Move from the hips with your feet slightly apart, following your subject smoothly in the viewfinder.

■ Support the lens.
Cradle the lens in the palm

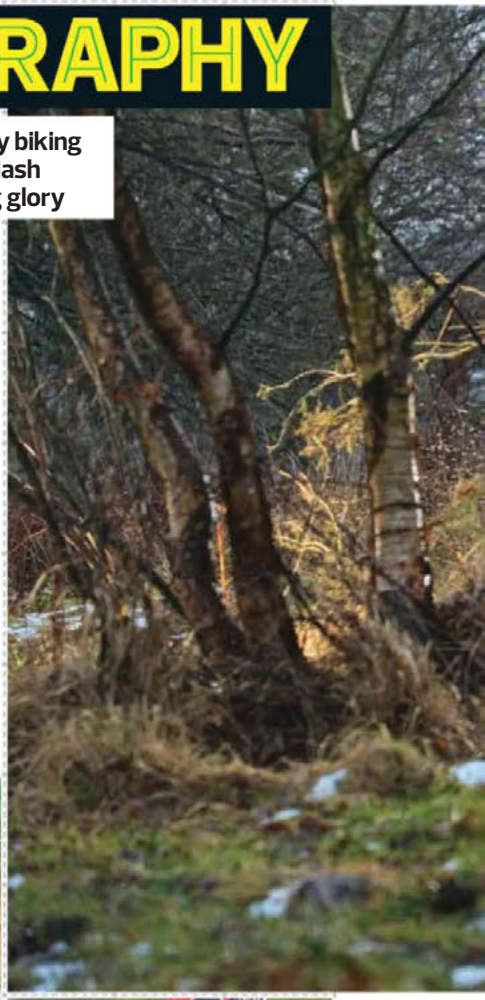
of your left hand with your elbow tight to your body. This supports the weight of camera and lens, leaving your right hand free.

■ Squeeze, don't press.
When you're ready to take the shot, squeeze the shutter button gently – don't stab at it. Jabbing on the shutter button causes unnecessary movement and can lead to camera shake.

■ Anticipate the moment.
If you're using a DSLR, you're blind at the moment of exposure. So plan ahead and take the shot a fraction of a second early. If you see it, you've missed it.

■ Use a hood.
Lenses are at their best when stray light is kept at bay. A hood helps with this and also provides some protection from dust, mud and rain in the thick of the action.

■ Leave the tripod behind.
Most pro sports photographers don't use a tripod. If you're using a heavy lens, a monopod might take the weight off your arms, but moving subjects need a mobile camera and photographer.



NEXT STEPS

■ Go wide, go long.
Action photography works best when you go for impact. Depending on the subject, you can either choose a long lens to get you closer to the action for a tight crop, or go wide angle and get closer to the sporting action yourself.

■ Flash freeze frame.
Flash works with a really short burst of light – 1/1000sec or less. That can make it useful for freezing the action when a fast shutter speed isn't possible, but only if you can get the flash close to the action.

SETTINGS

■ Fast or slow?
Slow shutter speeds work well for smoothly moving subjects. Most of the time, though, you'll want a fast speed – 1/500sec or above – to keep it sharp.

■ Autofocus... or not
For action happening at a fixed point, you'll get more consistent shots by manually pre-focusing.

■ Lighting matters
Set your shutter speed first, then use the ISO to control the aperture. Wider apertures will throw the background out of focus, but you'll need to get your subject focused bang-on.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

■ Shooting a sequence
If you keep your camera still during a burst of shots it's easy to stitch them together in Photoshop for a dramatic result.

■ Panning technique
For side-on shots, drop the shutter speed really low (start with 1/125sec). Follow the subject smoothly and you'll end up with a creamy background and sharp, high-impact subject.

■ Off-camera flash
Easily available radio triggers allow you to mount the flash away on a tripod so you can put light exactly where you want it.

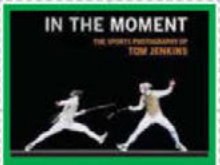
EXERCISE

1. **Rope in a volunteer** to ride a bike past you several times at exactly the same speed.

2. **Start with a high shutter speed** – say 1/500sec – and practice getting a well-centred shot of bike and rider at the same spot. One shot for each pass – don't use burst mode.

3. **Once you've got the composition** and timing consistent, drop the shutter speed and see how low you can go while still keeping bike and rider sharp. With practice, even speeds as low as 1/15sec can give good results.

LEVEL UP WITH...



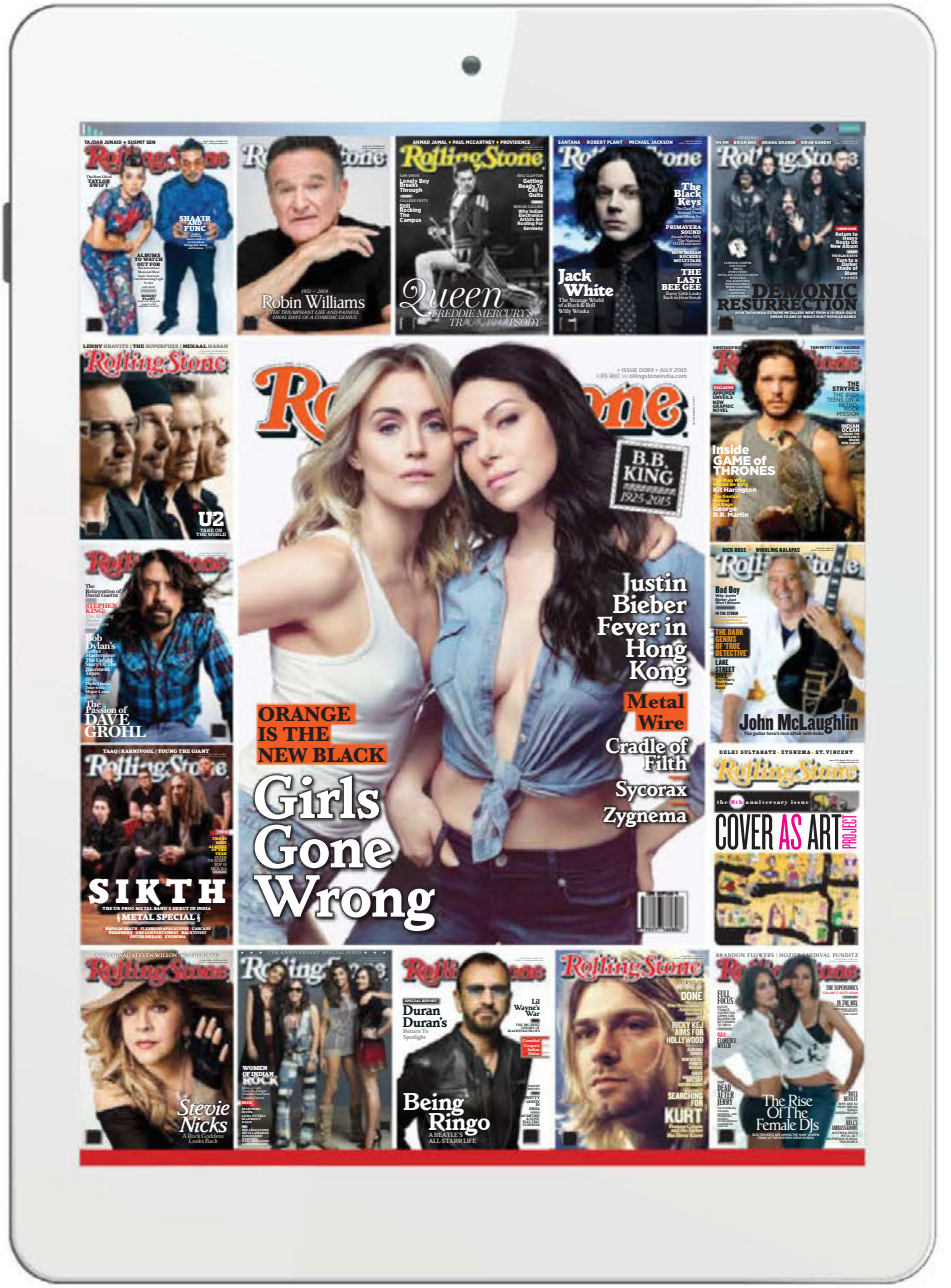
THE BOOK
IN THE MOMENT
₹2495 / amazon.in
Tom Jenkins is one of the most experienced pro sports photographers around, having spent the past two decades travelling the world to shoot events for his clients. Combining an eye for creative composition with bulletproof technique, the images in his book should provide inspiration for any budding sports photographer.

THE WEBSITE
DAVE BLACK
daveblackphotography.com
Many pro photographers keep their techniques a closely guarded secret, but Dave Black's website is packed full of useful hints and tips. He's an expert on remote flash photography – among many other things – and his eye for detail and impeccable timing mean you'll never be short of ideas for improving your sports photography.

THE WORKSHOP
PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL
nikonschool.in
Camera experts at Nikon conduct occasional courses for wannabe snappers. Aimed at getting you close to the action – right where the pros normally are – these are a chance for photographers with some experience to hone their skills under pro guidance and have some fun while at it.

Rolling Stone

MUSIC • GADGET • STYLE



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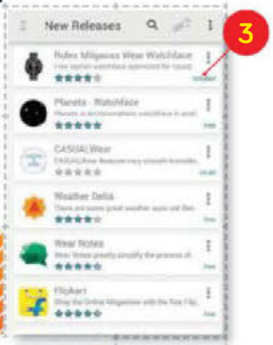
5 WAYS TO... REAWESOMISE ANDROID WEAR

After the honeymoon period of checking the weather and confirming normal heart rate on your wrist, use these apps and accessories to upgrade your smartwatch



1 Supercharge its menu

Wear Mini Launcher
If we had to choose just one app to install on an Android Wear smartwatch, this would be it. It lets you drag up a list of all installed apps in an instant, while a second swipe brings up quick settings like volume, screen brightness and alerts. It's so hugely useful, Google should have built it in from the get-go.
₹free / play.google.com

2 Give it a major facelift

Facer Watch Face
Facer is the ultimate app for creating your own custom faces. It lets you insert your own pictures, text, and different widgets like weather info. You can even change the size of notification cards. If you're not feeling creative, there are also loads of ready-made faces online to download and install in a flash.
₹62 / play.google.com

3 Treat it with some apps

Android Wear Store
The Google Play store is pretty convoluted, and it can be hard to find apps specifically made for Android Wear, which is where this store comes in. It might not be as pretty, but it's full of compatible apps and is much easier than trawling through the main site. Your smartwatch will be pimped out with fancy apps in no time.
bit.ly/store-android-wear

4 Turn it into a spy camera

LookBehind
Forget the *GoldenEye* watch face – this app will turn your clever timepiece into one Bond would be proud of. Once installed, you can view a live feed of your phone's camera on your watch screen, letting you peer around corners or into hard-to-reach places. The LED flash can even be controlled remotely. Take that, Q.
₹60 / play.google.com

5 Let there be light

Philips Hue Starter Kit
These Android Wear-compatible smartbulbs can be turned on and off at the tap of your smartwatch's screen, and you can even change the colours and dim them. Time to pretend you've got a disco-obsessed poltergeist in your living room. Or just tell your dinner guests you've got the power of telekinesis.
₹28,500 / amazon.in

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Smartphones	102
Tablets	103
Hi-fi streaming	105
Headphones	106
Home cinema	107
TVs	108
Home Computers & Consoles	109
Cameras	110
Laptops	111
Games	112
Wearables & Smarthome	113

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HOT BUY

1 Samsung Galaxy S6

This is a new era for Samsung, with a smart upgrade that fixes not just things that were amiss in the Galaxy S5, but things that have plagued them for years. No plastic here: its front and back are super-tough Gorilla Glass 4, its sides aluminium. In terms of ergonomics and speaker quality, HTC still wins, but only just. And in the more important areas of camera performance, screen tech and raw power, the Galaxy S6 tramples its rival. We just wish it had a microSD slot.

STUFF SAYS
Samsung has proven its critics wrong – the Galaxy S6 is the new benchmark for flagship phones
from ₹49,900 ★★★★★

2		**Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge** The Edge, with its wraparound screen, is the ultimate money-no-object phone. It's techier and beefier than its brother, but it's also a good deal pricier. Its curvy USP may be more about style than anything else, but come on, it's pretty darned cool.	from ₹58,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR CUTTING-EDGE GADGETEERS
NEW 3		**LG G4** The leather-clad LG G4 is a treat for those who want something that looks and feels a bit different. Its camera is incredibly powerful, giving you almost as much control as a DSLR, and the large screen is brilliant... but the battery life holds it back from the top.	₹51,500 ★★★★★	
4		**HTC One M9** This year's HTC One is not a full-on revolution, but it is a careful, considered refinement of one of the best phones ever, packing high-end specs into a premium design. The switch to a megapixel main camera results in beautifully detailed daytime shots.	₹47,240* ★★★★★	
5		**Motorola Moto Turbo** It's the most complete package out there. It's smart, fast, and it's a handset crafted so beautifully, you'll find yourself picking it up often for no reason whatsoever sometimes. It's priced rather competitively too, given those impressive specs.	₹41,999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BANG FOR THE BUCK
6		**Motorola Moto X** Smart, fast and beautifvully crafted: Motorola's software works together seamlessly to make your life that bit easier and the brilliant Bamboo option sets it apart from any other top-spec smartphone out there. This feels like a phone that's built for everyone.	from ₹21,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUILD AND POWER
7		**HTC One M8** After a few months at the top of the charts, the HTC One M8 is outdone by the brilliant new Moto X. But that doesn't make it any less capable as a smartphone, thanks to its all-metal build, Ultrapixel camera and beautiful Sense 6.0 skin. We still love you, M8.	₹49,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUILD AND POWER
8		**Apple iPhone 6** With its slim, deeply attractive build and software overhaul, the iPhone 6 is the freshest-feeling iPhone in years. Its larger screen is big enough to be a useful improvement, with gorgeous colours, and this is Apple's best-ever battery.	from ₹53,500 ★★★★★	
9		**OnePlus One** Believe the hype. To get one of the best smartphones on the planet, you don't need ₹50,000 any more. You just need an invite. In terms of design, performance, screen and battery life you simply can't get better than this for anywhere near ₹25,000.	from ₹18,999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR VALUE FOR MONEY
10		**Motorola Moto G (2014)** When the specs go up but the price comes down, you know Motorola means business. The new Moto G makes some improvements over the 2013 variant, including a bigger screen, better cam and stereo front speakers, all while dropping the price. Brilliant VFM.	₹9999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR RECESSION - BUSTI NG

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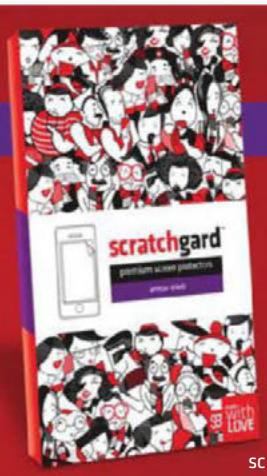

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HOT BUY

1 Apple iPad Air 2

The iPad Air didn't really need to be thinner, but that doesn't mean 6.1mm isn't mighty impressive. This combines with reassuring weight and impeccable build quality to make this the most desirable tab on the planet. While the display is the same Retina resolution as before, clever screen tech brings the pixels closer to the surface, and the whole experience is even faster than before thanks to the new A8X chip. Basically it's the best tablet in the world made even better.

STUFF SAYS
Thinner, lighter and mightier: Apple's iron-fisted reign at the top of the tablet charts continues unabated
from ₹35,900 ★★★★★

2		**Apple iPad Mini 2 With Retina Display** The iPad Mini 3 is out now but all it adds is Touch ID. The good news is that the Mini 2 is now down to ₹21,900, which is frankly bargain-tastic. That's why the 'old' model makes it to our Top 10 – if you're after a mini-tablet of quality, your choice has just got easier.	from ₹21,900 ★★★★★	
3		**Samsung Galaxy Tab S 10.5** Samsung has blessed the Galaxy Tab with one of the best tablet screens we've ever laid eyes on, plus an impressive camera and some incredible stamina – but there are performance niggles and Apple's tablet app selection is still far superior.	₹38,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR MAGAZINES AND MOVIES
4		**Microsoft Surface Pro 3** At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from ₹61,267* ★★★★★	BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE
5		**Asus Transformer Book T100** This 10.1in tab-and-dock combo has enough grunt to run full Win 8.1 thanks to Intel's new Baytrail CPU. The 1366x768 screen is a good'un, with crisp text, great contrast and colours that pop, while dual-band Wi-Fi and a day-long battery are also welcome.	from ₹26,000 ★★★★★	BEST FOR WINDOWS LOYALISTS
6		**Google Nexus 9** The design isn't as pristine, but this is a real Android contender to rival the iPads. You get the new Android 5.0 Lollipop software, bags of power and a super-sharp display. With 12 hours of video play and two front-facing speakers, it'll be a great film buddy.	from ₹28,900 ★★★★★	
7		**Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4** Samsung's superb screen, design, performance and a wider selection of optimised apps mean that against many other Android tabs it's still a winner. However, the new low price for the iPad Mini 2 makes the Galaxy Tab S 8.4 look rather pricey.	₹27,900 ★★★★☆	
8		**Lenovo ThinkPad Tablet 2** You're a high flyer. You have work to do and neither iOS or Android has the oomph. You need the Windows 8 Pro-running Tablet 2. It lasts all day, is powerful enough for full-fat desktop software and with the keyboard dock it's an ultraportable laptop.	₹50,000 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR DESKTOP VERSATILITY
9		**Sony Xperia Tablet Z** Sony just refuses to play by the rules. Stretching its stylish Xperia Z smartphone out to 10in should have made it thicker, but it hasn't; less crisply screened, but it isn't; and not waterproof, but it is. The price for this extreme engineering, however, is high.	₹30,990 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR BATH-BASED TABLET FUN
10		**Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 (2014)** The new 10.1 is fit to bursting with clever tricks, comes with the note-tastic S Pen and has a stunning 2560x1600 screen. But while we can forgive its tacky looks, minor performance glitches deny it that fifth star; we hope firmware updates will fix them.	₹24,990 ★★★★☆	

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HOT BUY

1 Bose SoundTouch 20

All this time, if you wanted a true multi-room system, you had no choice but to go the Sonos way. It took long enough, but we finally have an option, and one that you can buy at your friendly neighbourhood mall with zero effort. The Bose SoundTouch system wirelessly connects with your computer or NAS device and streams directly using your home's Wi-Fi network. Multiple SoundTouch devices mean you can control what you want playing in which room. We love it.

STUFF SAYS
Infinite music in every room without the need for custom installers? Sign us up now, please

₹33,638 ★★★★★

UPDATE

2	**Naim Mu-so** ₹1,00,000 for a wireless speaker?! Well yes, but what a wireless speaker it is. Naim has ploughed all of its high-end hi-fi experience into delivering a beautifully made, great-sounding device with AirPlay, streaming and aptX Bluetooth all on-board.	₹1,39,875 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ONE-BOX WI-FI HI-FI
3	**Monitor Audio Airstream S200** It may look a bit like a floppy skyscraper, but the Monitor Audio's Bluetooth-plus-AirPlay speaker makes a lot of sense, mostly because it takes up very little shelf/desk/table space but makes loads of lovely noise. It's a bit of a steal at ₹42k.	₹42,200 ★★★★★	
4	**Cambridge Audio Go** There are loads of very cheap Bluetooth speakers out there, but we reckon it's worth spending that little bit more to get something that's really good – and that's the Go. It sounds awesome, it's really nicely built and its battery lasts a massive 18 hours.	₹12,500 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PICNIC PARTIES
5	**Bluesound Multiroom System** Fancy a bit of Sonos-style multiroom but with better-than-CD-quality sound thrown in? You want a Bluesound. There are all-in-one speakers, adapters for your existing hi-fi, and a Vault that rips and stores all your CDs. All can handle high-resolution audio.	from ₹45,000 ★★★★★	
6	**Bang and Olufsen A9** It's big, it's round and it can look like anything you want it to if you put a front cover on it (we personally like the moon look). It also has a sound that's surprisingly good for a speaker of this shape. So essentially, this art has nice music.	₹2,49,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR DECORATING YOUR LIVING ROOM
7	**Libratone Zipp** A fuzzy, cylindrical, colourful AirPlay dock that will deliver detailed, punchy 360° sound anywhere at all, thanks to a built-in battery that gives it four hours of outdoor life. Direct Wi-Fi skills free you from cables, routers and everything but the boogie.	₹29,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR AL FRESCO PARTIES
8	**Bowers & Wilkins Z2** The baby of B&W's AirPlay range is a little belter, and it adds a proper Lightning dock to Apple's wireless tech. It'll easily fill a small to medium-sized room with chunky bass, punchy beats and lovely, clear vocals. You'll buy it for the look, but love it for the sound.	₹31,500 ★★★★★	
9	**Cambridge Audio Minx Xi** It might not look all that fancy, but the Minx Xi is like that micro system you had at uni, only it gobbles internet music rather than Rage Against The Machine CDs. Just add a pair of quality speakers (try Wharfedale Diamond 220s) and you've got a great hi-fi.	₹55,500 ★★★★★	
10	**Harman Kardon Aura** Similar in looks to the Soundsticks it just replaced in this hallowed list of lists, the Harman Kardon Aura is a one-piece Bluetooth/Wi-Fi/Auxiliary speaker that looks the part and sounds pretty neat, too.	₹34,990 ★★★★★	

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HOT BUY

1

AKG K451

They've actually been around a little while now, but what's put the K451 on-ears back on to our radar is a real world price of about ₹4999. For that money, they're unbeatable – awesomely agile and punchy sound wrapped up in a subtly stylish and foldable design. Add both standard and three-button control cables for maximising compatibility and there's practically no excuse for not getting brilliant sound from your phone.

STUFF SAYS
Fantastic sound and great portability at an almost unbeatable price. The perfect PMP upgrade
₹4999 ★★★★★

2		**Bowers & Wilkins P5 Series 2** Even the most demanding audio buff would find it hard to fault these – B&W have delivered a pair of premium on-ears that look, feel and sound exquisite. You control playback and volume with your iPhone, while feeling like a VIP guest at an intimate gig.	₹23,500 ★★★★★	
3		**Philips Fidelio M1 MkII** Your commute deserves a quality soundtrack, and second-generation Fidelio M1 headphones give you precisely that. There's oodles of detail to the sound and they punch harder than the Hulk. Beats and their ilk can't touch them.	₹10,999 ★★★★★	
4		**SoundMagic E10S** This is actually the third version of SoundMagic's awesome, affordable in-ears – not that you'd tell by looking. They sound even better, though: a little smoother and more refined, with tight, weighty bass. Plus there's now a mic and button for smartphone use.	₹2349 ★★★★★	
5		**Sony MDR-EX650AP** If you're prepared to pay a little extra for your in-ears, these Sonys are even better than the SoundMagics above. The sound is that bit bigger, a little more detailed and a little more grown-up, and if you don't like the brass finish, there's a silver version.	₹2490 ★★★★★	
6		**Bose QuietComfort 25** The best kind of silence is the kind you then fill with sweet, sweet music, and that's what the QuietComfort 25s give you. The active noise-cancelling quells office hubbub, air-conditioning and aeroplane hum, and delivers cracking sound in its place.	₹21,263 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SHUTTING OUT THE WORLD
7		**Philips Fidelio M2BT** Building on the award-winning M1BT, Philips has added NFC for its new wireless Bluetooth headphones and swapped the dark blue design for an understated black finish. The smart built-in controls and rich sound performance remain.	₹14,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR GREAT SOUND WITH NO WIRES
8		**Audio-Technica M50x** In their limited edition avatar, these extremely talented cans from AT are a tantalizing mix of style and sound. They'll handle almost every genre of music thrown at them. Tight bass, exceptional detail and a competitive price make these a superb package.	₹14,500 ★★★★★	
9		**Sol Republic Master Tracks** Really tough things are usually really ugly, which is why the lovely styling of the "virtually indestructible" Master Tracks headphones is so refreshing. Loud, punchy, fast and controlled, the sound is just as attractive as the design. Worth every rupee.	₹13,999 ★★★★★	
10		**Sennheiser Momentum** Classily styled, cushion-comfortable and smooth-sounding, the Momentums are the perfect pair of over-ears for the dapper man about town. New! An On-Ear version – smaller, cheaper at ₹14,990, and available in pink, blue, green and, um, ivory/brown.	₹24,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR QUALITY AND STYLE IN ONE

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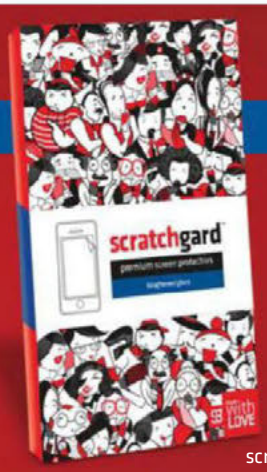

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HOT BUY

1 Sony BDP-S490

A quite remarkable device, this Sony sounds great, has a wonderful picture in 2D or 3D and is crammed with on-demand content including Sony's own Movies Unlimited. It's also one of the most value-for-money Blu Ray players you can buy today, and highlights Sony's complete and total dominance over the technology. It does lack video upscaling, but you don't really need it yet, and the important thing is that it does 1080p extremely well.

STUFF SAYS
The only choice for serious TV, movie or sport addicts, this Sony is the Blu-Ray player you need
₹13,990 ★★★★★

NEW 2	**Roku 2** Roku's new mid-range offering is the most compelling yet. It is essentially identical to the Roku 3, just without the smart remote. With a customisable feed, Netflix, Now TV, Google Play, YouTube and all the UK catch-up services, it's unbiased, slick and simple.	₹6399 ★★★★★	
3	**Yamaha YSP-2500** If your only requirement for a soundbar is that it should sound better than your telly, almost any will do; but if you want one that will fool your ears into thinking they're surrounded by actual speakers, you want the amazingly clever Yamaha YSP-2500.	₹1,09,990 ★★★★★	
4	**Sony BDV-N990** The biggest bargain in home cinema, the Blu-ray -packing N990 has a massive spec but a micro price. Picture and sound are excellent, Sony's smart services are immense and its stylish curves and touch-sensitive controls add a dash of premium quality. Brilliant.	₹34,990* ★★★★★	BEST FOR AWESOME ALL-IN-ONE VALUE
5	**BenQ W1400** What's better than *Inception*? *Inception* on a 300in screen, that's what. How do you get a 300in screen in your house? You buy the BenQ W1400. If your lounge isn't quite that big it can also project an 84in image from just 2m away. Try finding an 84in TV for ₹1.5lac.	₹1,50,000 ★★★★★	
6	**Panasonic DMP-BDT220** It's not the most extravagantly specified Blu-ray player around (though Panasonic's remote-control app is a joy), but the BDT220 has the sort of picture- and sound quality to make its price look like a misprint. And that's our favourite kind of mistake.	₹13,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BLU-RAY ON A BUDGET
7	**Marantz UD7007** Pricey like an Aston Martin is pricey and about as satisfying to own, this Marantz can play any disc you like, streams music at high-def resolutions and can withstand an earthquake. If you really, really take movies and music seriously, this is your player.	₹69,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR THE ULTIMATE IN QUALITY
8	**Sonos Playbar** A characteristically Sonos take on the soundbar, the Playbar hooks up to your TV via its single optical input and fills your room with a big, detailed sound. And as with all Sonos kit, it can stream your own music files and more as part of a multiroom system.	₹60,000* ★★★★★	BEST FOR STREAMING MUSIC
9	**B&W Panorama 2** Let's put aside the gimmicks for a second and consider what's most important: the sound. That's where the Panorama 2 wins. You get a direct and focused sound, clear dialogue and beautiful design and build, although this is all very expensive.	₹2,11,500 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PREMIUM SOUND
10	**Microsoft Xbox 360** The Xbox One will be more media-centric than ever before, but looks like it'll require a post-launch firmware update to really shine. We'll be testing the One's media skills soon, but for now the 360 with its Windows Media Server is still a slick streamer.	from ₹15,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR MULTIMEDIA FUN

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HOT BUY

1 LG 55EC930T

Self-illuminating OLED (organic light-emitting diode) screens used to be full of potential but were criminally expensive. No longer. Behold this curved LG marvel which, for the most part, is no thicker than a pane of glass and verging on affordable. The levels of contrast and dynamism are a revelation. No, it's not 4K. But when 1080p Full HD looks this good, you won't be counting pixels – and it'll be some time before you'll be able to feed your TV a 4K-heavy diet anyway.

STUFF SAYS
4K and millions of pixels might be the future, but this LG OLED is the most amazing TV of right now
₹3,59,900 ★★★★★

2	**Samsung UA55HU7200** Finally, a 4K TV that can be recommended without hesitation, plus it's just as good as a Full HD TV when playing 1080p stuff. Chuck in all of Samsung's usual smart TV whizzbang, remove the silly motion-sensing controls and you've got a real star.	₹2,36,500 ★★★★★	
NEW 3	**Samsung UA55JS9000K** Each of its 8.3million pixels is put to good use, filling the screen's handsome real estate with pin-sharp outlines, potent contrast and eye-popping colours. Sound-wise, it's way more powerful than bog-standard flatscreens. Worth the pretty paise ? Oh yes.	₹4,40,900 ★★★★★	
4	**Sony KDL-50W800B** 4K a bit too new-fangled (or pricey) for you? How about a 50in edge-lit LED LCD with all of Sony's smart features for just over a lakh? It's not even like picture quality's been sacrificed – this is an absolute corker of a telly in every way.	₹1,12,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR AFFORDABLE BRILLIANCE
NEW 5	**LG 55UF950T** This telly comes to life in a flash, and menus don't waste time loading – it's a glossy double-page advert for pixel-packing 4K technology. The punchy palette revels in dazzling hues, deep blacks and Essex-smile whites, and the sound is solid.	₹2,94,900 ★★★★☆	
6	**Sony KDL-32W700B** There's nothing wrong with sticking with a smaller TV, but you should still make sure you pick a good 'un. This 32in Sony is the best, in terms of both picture performance and features, which include 1080p resolution and all the smart stuff you can handle.	₹44,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR A SMALLER SCREEN
7	**Sony KD-55X8500B** If you want to jump on the 4K bandwagon with Sony you could go for the wedge-shaped X9, which is great, but we'd suggest that this slimmer, less intrusive 'entry-level' option is an even better buy. It's still got all the smart stuff and great performance.	₹2,34,900 ★★★★☆	
8	**LG 42LB750T** The performance is very good, but what makes this 42in LG really special is its webOS user interface, which treats all sources, apps, recordings and live broadcasts equally, getting you to the content you want to watch quicker. And isn't that what a TV is for?	₹81,900 ★★★★☆	
NEW 9	**Bang & Olufsen BeoVision Avant 55** That price tag is pretty high. Plus, you'll have to shell out extra for the remote and mesmerising TV stand. But then again, this is one of the classiest TVs that money can buy. The fine HD picture, excellent audio and overall looks is just, sheer class.	₹9,99,990 ★★★★☆	
10	**Panasonic TH-42AS610** It's not the prettiest, it's not the smartest, and with just two HDMI inputs, it's not the most connected TV about, but there's a really simple, intuitive OS pulling the strings here – and a performance that's very strong given the price and 42in size.	₹59,900 ★★★★☆	

HOME COMPUTERS

HOT BUY 1		**Apple iMac** Other than regular power upgrades and a bit of slimming, the iMac has been largely unchanged for a while, but it does now run Apple's lovely Yosemite OS. There's also now a more affordable version and an eye-wateringly expensive 4K model.	from ₹91,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND BRILLIANCE
2		**Apple Mac Mini** This tiny PC is still one of the most capable devices in the size group, and is intelligently priced as well. You are going to need to plug in the keyboard, mouse and monitor, but it's a convenient little device that you could slip into your backpack if you need to.	from ₹36,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR COMPACT POWER
3		**Alienware X51 (2014)** The X51 hasn't changed a huge amount, but the wee size matched with powerful components make it perfectly suited to HD gaming. Steam Machines are going to liven this market up but right now it's the best balance of power and form in PC land.	₹tba ★★★★★	
4		**Raspberry Pi Model B+** It's a fully functioning PC that's barely bigger than a credit card, and now it's a little more flexible than before thanks to two extra USB ports and better power management. Don't expect a 'proper' computer – this is for tinkerers after a fun new project.	from ₹2875 ★★★★☆	
5		**Lenovo IdeaCentre A720** The A720's stand mechanism allows that lumbering 27in screen to lie flat, which is ideal for multi-user access to its 10-point multitouch. A quad-core i7 processor gives it plenty of power although the peripherals don't feel quite as well made as we'd like.	from ₹99,990 ★★★★☆	

GAMES CONSOLES

HOT BUY 1		**Sony PlayStation 4** It may not quite be the finished article, but this is the best games machine on the planet. It has whisper-quiet operation, a sleek form and bags of power, with full 1080p on all titles and not a whiff of lag. When proper media streaming arrives, it'll be unstoppable.	₹39,990 ★★★★★	
2		**Microsoft Xbox One** This is very different to the Xbox One of 2013. Most significantly, the unpopular Kinect feature is now out of the deal, allowing Microsoft to drop the price and releasing enough extra power for developers to make their games look and play better.	₹39,990 ★★★★★	
3		**Microsoft Xbox 360** Yes, it's been succeeded by the One, but the years have been kind to the 360. With an amazing catalogue of recent games that use its full potential, brilliant media streaming skills and a low, low price it's impossible not to recommend it to cash-strapped gamers.	from ₹15,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUDGET GAMING
4		**Sony PlayStation 3** The PS3 has been around a while but, like the Xbox 360, that just means it has plenty of great games. Online gaming via PlayStation Network is still brilliant and still free, and it's worth buying for its Blu-ray and media streaming alone.	from ₹16,990 ★★★★★	
5		**Nintendo 3DS XL** The 3D effect may be a gimmick that hasn't paid off, but put that to one side and the 3DS is still the king of the portable games machines. The XL is the biggest version yet, and there's now a massive catalogue of inventive dual-screen games to play.	₹22,990 ★★★★☆	

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PROSUMER CAMS

HOT BUY 1		**Olympus OM-D E-M1** The Olympus flagship is armed with the same excellent 16.3MP sensor as its predecessor the E-M5, but has an improved autofocus system, a startlingly good electronic viewfinder and masses of direct controls. Also look out for the E-M10.	₹1,05,000 (body only) ★★★★★	
2		**Canon EOS 700D** Look, it's a new Canon at No2. No, wait, it's the old one. Actually, it's kind of both. The 700D is a minor upgrade over the 650D, keeping its 18MP sensor, flip-out touchscreen and autofocus during video and adding little beyond a new kit lens. Still great, though.	₹43,995 (body only) ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND VALUE
3		**Sony A6000** Sony's new system camera may be tiny but it packs a big photographic punch. There may be no optical image stabilisation but the incredible speed and accuracy of the A6000's autofocus is a real highlight, as is its large, clear electronic viewfinder.	₹40,990 (body only) ★★★★★	
4		**Nikon D810** The top-end Nikon D810 is a monster camera. Its image quality and performance are hard to fault – if you're a serious photographer willing to stump up the cash then it's a fantastic buy. However, there are some features missing, such as 4K video and Wi-Fi.	₹1,99,950 (body only) ★★★★★	
5		**Sony A7R** We love this camera. It's lightweight but tough and delivers results that outstrip pretty much any other compact system camera on the market. It has a huge full-frame 36.4MP sensor and noise-suppression. Your wallet might weep, but your photo album will sing.	₹1,24,990 (body only) ★★★★★	

COMPACT CAMERAS

HOT BUY 1		**Sony DSC-HX60** 2014's HX60 isn't a huge departure from its predecessor in terms of its build quality, ease of use, specifications and 30x zoom lens – all of which are excellent. What it does add is NFC and a newer Bionz X processor, making it a slightly nippier performer.	₹22,990 ★★★★★	
2		**Sony DSC-RX100 III** If you're looking for the best tiny snapper around, this is it. Excellent image quality, fast autofocus, a useful electronic viewfinder and professional video recording, all squeezed into a truly teeny package that'll fit into your jeans pocket. We're smitten.	₹54,990 ★★★★★	
3		**Fujifilm FinePix X100S** Fujifilm's souped up its fixed-lens retro shooter, with faster focusing and a big APS-C sensor. It's not all new, though, keeping the 35mm-equivalent f/2 lens and hybrid viewfinder from the X100. A less retro version with black finish is now available too.	₹74,999 ★★★★★	
4		**Canon PowerShot G16** The G16 packs a lot into its sturdy body: optical viewfinder, loads of manual controls and an f1.8-2.8, 28-140mm (equivalent) zoom lens. Upgrades over the G15 include Wi-Fi and faster burst shooting of up to 12fps, while image quality is as good as ever.	₹31,995 ★★★★★	
5		**Nikon Coolpix AW120** The ultimate rugged camera: almost indestructible, and fit for temperatures as low as -10°C, it will even survive a rinse cycle in your dishwasher. The AW120 also takes lovely pictures and impressive video in both good lighting and dimmer conditions.	₹17,950 ★★★★★	BEST FOR EXTREME EXPLOITS

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HOT BUY

1 Apple MacBook Pro 13in (2015)

Apple hasn't changed too many parts of the MacBook Pro for 2015. There's a fancy new trackpad and the latest generation of Intel CPUs, which deliver better stamina as well as a chunk more power. This is an incremental upgrade, but given how good the Pro already was, that's more than enough to keep it right at the top of the laptop honours list. If you need power as well as stamina and portability, this is one of the best laptops money can buy.

STUFF SAYS
If it ain't broke... it hasn't radically changed, but the Pro's performance and trackpad are top of its class

from ₹94,900 ★★★★★

2	**Asus ZenBook UX305** Asus knows what it's doing. It knows that the Apple MacBook Air laptops are treading water and the ZenBook UX305 is pretty much everything the 2015 Air should have been, with its fetching aluminium design and as good a display as any ₹1 lac laptop.	from ₹49,999 ★★★★★	
3	**Microsoft Surface Pro 3** At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from ₹61,267* ★★★★★	BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE
4	**Alienware 17** A brute of a machine in every way, the Alienware 17 weighs as much as four MacBook Airs and probably frags harder than 10 of them. Core i7 Haswell processor at 3.4GHz, Nvidia GeForce graphics, up to 32GB of RAM... Our trigger finger's already itching.	from ₹1,42,390 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SERIOUS GAMERS
5	**Apple MacBook (2015)** This is no 'Air', nor 'Pro': a clear sign that this is what Apple sees as the future of the ultraportable laptop. And it's certainly very desirable: a 12in lean machine with a superb screen and haptic touchpad. However, the lack of ports can be frustrating.	from ₹72,900 ★★★★★	
6	**Apple MacBook Air 13in (2015)** Apple is scraping by with pretty much the same Air design as before. You get a new processor, new connectors and slightly improved battery life, but still no Retina screen. However, if a portable road warrior is what you're after, this is still a great choice.	from ₹86,900 ★★★★☆	
7	**Asus Zenbook UX302** Asus has done a wonderful job of creating an ultra-slim laptop that's as far removed from Apple's influence as possible, while maintaining a stylish and unique aesthetic. The 13.3in display is razor-sharp and colourful – this is our favourite Ultrabook.	₹99,999 ★★★★☆	
8	**Lenovo Yoga Pro 3** The third entry in the Yoga Pro line refines the laptop/tablet hybrid design with a power-sipping new Intel Core M processor plus slimness and style to make even the MacBook Air look worried. And you can stand it up like a tent. If you want.	₹1,14,990 ★★★★☆	
9	**Acer C720 Chromebook** Bargain Chromebooks are everywhere right now, but the C720 stands out even so. It's well made, well specced (for a Chromebook) and crucially, has proper ports: HDMI, USB3.0 and SD are all here. The HP at No.7 is prettier, but the Acer's the one we'd buy.	₹22,990 ★★★★☆	
10	**Acer Aspire S7** The Aspire S7 is almost the perfect Ultrabook – it matches the MacBook Air for weight, beats it for slimness by 6mm, and has a gorgeous 1920x1080 touch-friendly screen. Only its battery, which lasted a mere 5hrs on test, prevents it getting that fifth star.	₹1,02,999 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR TOUCHY-FEELY WINDOWS 8

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HOT BUY

1 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt PS4/PC/Xbox One

Weighing up the +12 damage of one sword with the +15% critical chance of another is tedious work, and there are issues with the AI's pathfinding that means your horse seems to get stuck behind just about anything and everything all the flaming time, but these are minor flaws in a game that is otherwise something of a fantasy masterpiece. Only the most RPG-phobic should avoid it – everyone else will find *The Witcher 3* to be one of the finest games of recent memory.

STUFF SAYS
Bigger than Skyrim and with more character, The Witcher 3 is a new RPG benchmark
★★★★★

2	**Bloodborne** PS4 Bloodborne is a tricky beast. It's not for everyone. But if you're looking for something a little different, something that'll really challenge and involve you a bit more than your average eight-hour shoot-a-thon, you need to check it out.	★★★★★	
3	**Far Cry 4** PC/PS3/Xbox 360/PS4/Xbox One Another holiday doesn't quite go to plan in Ubisoft's latest open-world adventure, now with added elephants. *Far Cry 4* is a glorious timesink. The principle attraction is most certainly its campaign, which is easily the best thing about it.	★★★★★	
4	**Grand Theft Auto V** PS3/PS4/Xbox One/Xbox 360 There's a lot about *Grand Theft Auto 5* that remains unchanged, but on the new-gen machines, it's a fantastic experience like never before. The crazy world of Los Santos offers enough thrills to keep gamers coming back for more and more.	★★★★★	
5	**The Last Of Us Remastered** PS3/PS4 Now remastered for PS4, this is the best zombie-apocalypse game ever. It looks magnificent and plays even better, with a moving story and frights aplenty. It's tough... but then a real-life zombie apocalypse would be. Think of this as essential prep.	★★★★★	**BEST FOR** ZOMBIFIED HORROR
6	**Forza Horizon 2** Xbox One This is everything an open-world driving game should be. There's loads to do and it captures the feeling of driving very fast better than any other racing game, to the point where *Forza Horizon 2* could soon eclipse its older brother once and for all.	★★★★★	
7	**Destiny** PS4/Xbox One This isn't for everyone, and those hoping for an epic *Halo*-style campaign may be disappointed. But in every other way, *Destiny* is on a bigger, far more multiplayer level, and with the added addictive quest for loot like *Diablo* – an irresistible combination.	★★★★★	
8	**FIFA 15** PS4/Xbox One If *FIFA 14* was Barcelona's tiki-taka – death by 1000 passes – then *FIFA 15* is Germany's more explosive World-Cup-winning evolution of it. Harder, faster and stronger: this is a better reflection of modern football than ever before.	★★★★★	
9	**Dying Light** PC/PS4/Xbox One Far Cry 3 x Shadow of Mordor x Dead Island = a bloody enjoyable zombie romp. Jumping around rooftops, playing co-op and bludgeoning zombies is all fun. A solid survival horror in an open-world setting, and we've enjoyed the undead company.	★★★★☆	
10	**Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number** PC/PS3/PS4/PS Vita Bigger and perhaps a little less focused than its predecessor, with the same bloody, brutal and brilliantly retro gameplay makes it a vital play. A subtle – if occasionally flawed – evolution of a winning formula that'll please old fans and win new ones.	★★★★☆	

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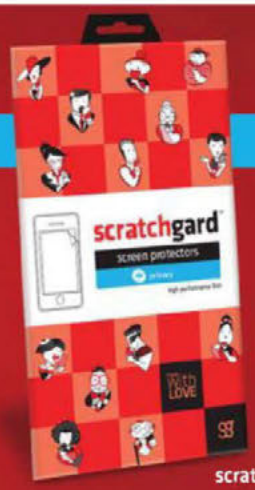

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HOT BUY

1 Pebble Steel

Unveiled at CES 2014, the Steel keeps the straightforward looks, crisp display and five-day battery life that helped the standard Pebble win our hearts. But it holds more RAM, apps and customisable faces this time, and swaps the plastic for either a 'Steel' silver or matte black stylish suit, making it look and feel more like an actual watch. The Steel goes beyond the gimmicks and into the world of real-world wearable tech. Pop it on your wristwear wish-list.

STUFF SAYS
The best smartwatch money can buy... and the original plastic Pebble is still available for a bit less
₹17,500 ★★★★★

NEW 2		**Garmin Vívosmart** The Vívosmart is definitely one of the most ergonomic and stylish activity trackers around. Besides tracking your daily routine and nudging you towards a better lifestyle, it also lets you know of any notifications from your smartphone through vibrations. Nifty!	₹12,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ACCURACY AND FITNESS
3		**Fitbit Flex** The Flex delivers all of Fitbit's activity-tracking smarts but in a form factor that's less fiddly than its belt-clip counterparts. It's packed with Bluetooth, NFC, vibratamotor and an LED display. See also the new Fitbit Charge, with a full display.	₹9499 ★★★★★	BEST FOR TRACKING YOUR LIFE
4		**GOQii Band** A fitness band, it's propreity app and a fitness and habit expert who coaches you to acheive your ideal lifestyle is what you'll be signing onto with GOQii. Get a hands-on idea of your progress via collected physical data, complete with statistical analysis.	from ₹3999 ★★★★★	
5		**Motorola Moto 360** With its iconic, head-turning design, this could be the first wearable you will want to wear. The Moto 360's our favourite and most comfortable Android Wear watch so far, but the battery might make you anxious and it's a few specs short of brilliance.	₹17,999 ★★★★★	
6		**Sony SmartWatch3** The Sony SmartWatch 3 has the brains of a Google watch, coupled with GPS skills for fitness fans, with plenty of power and decent battery life. A waterproof build and GPS powers make this the best fitness smartwatch around.	₹19,990 ★★★★☆	
7		**Roku Streaming Stick** 'Streaming Stick' tells you all you need to know, really: this is a stick, and it streams. It streams plenty, too. And unlike Chromecast, it's also a dab hand with your own video and music files. Lovely stuff.	₹4395 ★★★★☆	
8		**Misfit Shine** The Shine's minimalist exterior redefines fitness trackers. Former Apple CEO and Misfit co-founder John Sculley may have something to do with that. Plus, its fitness and sleep monitoring skills are solid, and a button cell means no recharging. Perfect.	₹9990 ★★★★☆	
9		**Google Chromecast** This USB memory-stick-sized cord-cutter is compatible with YouTube, Google Play movies and more: a cheap, simple way of getting web-sourced movies and shows onto your living-room TV.	₹2999 ★★★★☆	
10		**Samsung Gear Fit** The Gear Fit is small, light and relatively less intrusive, making it the better choice for people who don't care about the extra bells and whistles, or for active types who would find the design of the larger watches unwieldy.	₹8159 ★★★★☆	

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THE @MPOSTITRON

It looks nicer than it sounds. Don't we all? It looks like a humidifier, or possibly a very expensive piece of French hi-fi. It is neither of those things. It is the Growduce, a very clever 3D printer that's also a compost bin. Where other 3D printers create layers of plastic or resin, the Growduce contains a colony of bacteria and yeast that work as a team to turn waste – potato peelings, coffee grounds and that bag of salad you never got around to eating – into sheets of cellulose. The sheets can be layered into objects, just like a regular 3D printer.

That sounds... actually, that sounds disgusting. It's true that fishing out your newly-grown sunglasses from a bucket of bacterial goop will be a less glamorous consumer experience than going to the mall, but it'll be free. And let's face it, you already drink beer or eat yoghurt or enjoy any number of other products that are made using microbes, and you digest those things using a gut that simply would not work if it wasn't teeming with bacteria. Still, if you're really squeamish, you can liven up your biostuff by adding natural dyes or aromatic herbs to the Growduce during its cycle.

Is this happening, then? Is it real? It's still very much a concept, although the designers – biologist Aakriti Jain and industrial designer Guillian Graves – have grown leathery strips of cellulose that can be moulded and hardened into a plastic-like substance. And while it will be a long, long while before a 'cellulose printer' appears (or grows) in a shop window near you, there's huge potential in the idea of biodegradable products that can be simply chucked in the bin and digested into new products. Also, it should make peeling potatoes more exciting.

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- Hi-fidelity, iPhone5-class audio quality, achieving 110dB SNR & 90dB THD
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Computing

- 64-bit Octa-core running up to 2.2GHz and features the company's CorePilot™
- Imagination PowerVR Rogue Graphics Core
  - High-end performance GPU, clocked at up to 700MHz
  - Support OpenGL-ES 3.0 & OpenCL 1.2 Dual-channel LPDDR3 running at 933MHz for top-end
- Integrated, low-power hardware support for H.265 Ultra HD (4K2K) video record & playback

Networking

- LTE/UMTS/TD-SCDMA/EDGE Modem Integrated
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